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SRI S. S. BANERJEE, M. A.
Maharajkumar of Cossimbazar
1955

G A R I B A L D I

'

And other Poems.

G A R I' B A L D I

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY.

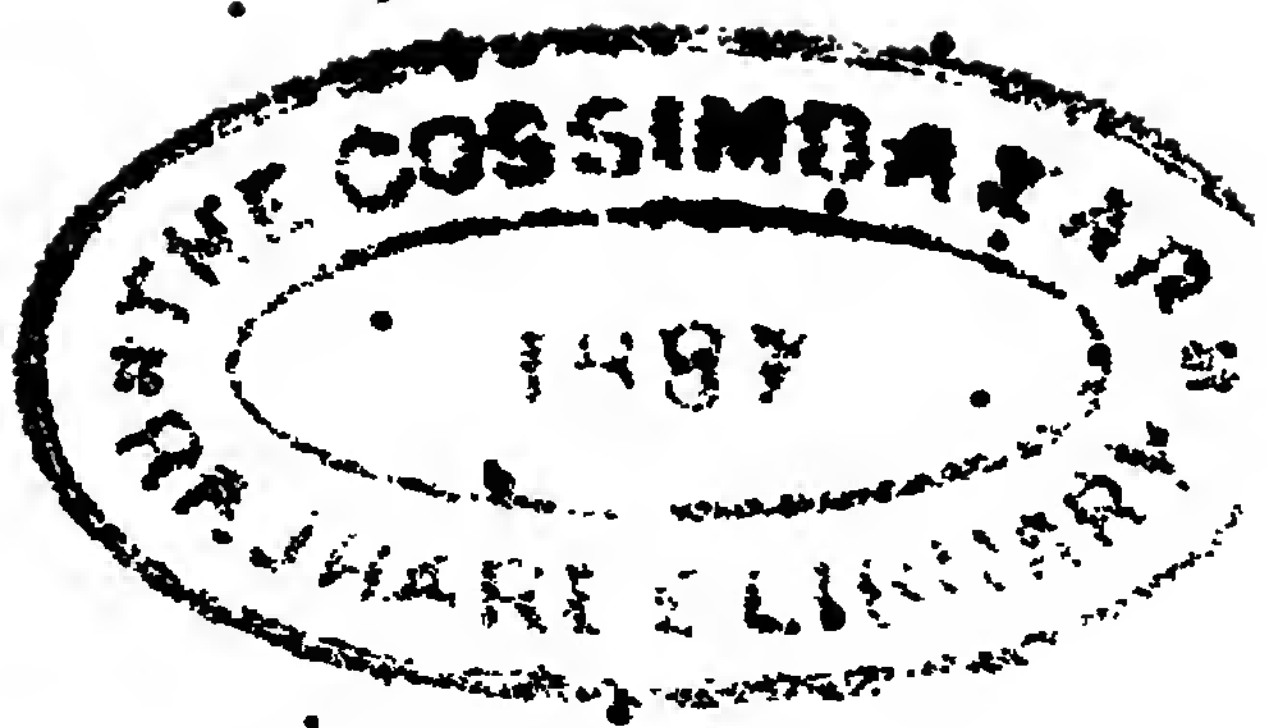
M. E. BRAD~~D~~ON.
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1861.



PREFACE.

IN submitting a volume of Poems to the critical Public, the inexperienced author ~~can~~ only appeal to the generous indulgence of that ever-generous tribunal.

The wonderful Sicilian campaign, which has made this departing year of 1860 one epic poem, has suggested the brief record here offered to the reader.

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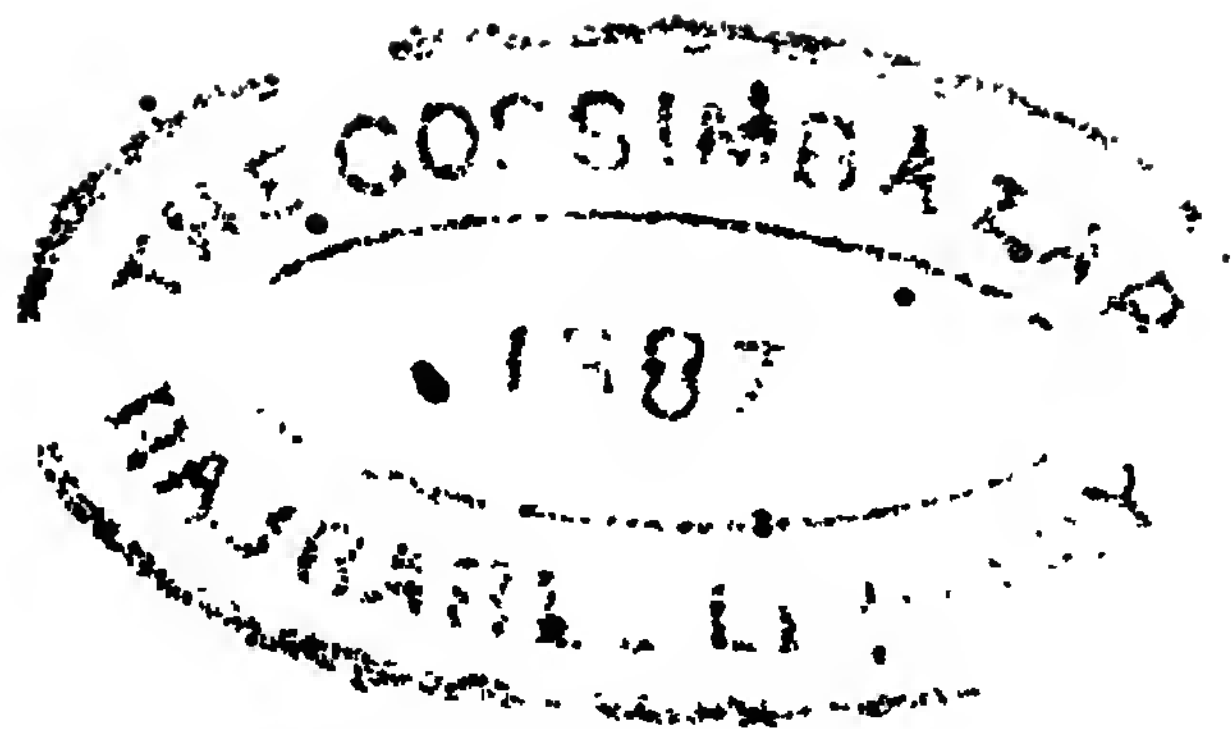
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1935

GARIBALDI.

I LIVED amongst a race of men who said,
“ There is no good beneath the weary sun :
The dead for ever burying the dead,
Great things for ever doing—never done ;
All life without one purpose—without one :
We, burning the brief candle of our years
For a dull game we have no stake upon,
Mocking our souls with acted hopes and fears,
Blind puppets dancing to the music of the spheres.

2

“ Not to our own—to music that we know not ;
 Not to our own,—no, not our own at best ;
 Our souls in other hands we go, or go not,
 Hither or thither, at a strange behest.
 Better the bird that broods upon her nest,
 And questions not the instinct she obeys,—
 Better the wave with foam upon its crest,
 Whose changeless course the tyrant moonbeam sways,
 Than we who wander blindfold through life’s trackless
 ways,—

3

“ Which lead us—where? we know not, only on :
 Or what if death be but a second birth,
 Making us what we were before the sun
 Lit up for us the stage of this great earth ?
 Oh, weary drama ! Strife so little worth,
 In which the hero gains a painted prize,
 And only values it by others’ dearth,
 Fame comes so late in answer to his sighs,
 That ere he clasps the lovely shade, the victor dies.

4

“Thrice hail, then, to the lotus-flowers of life !
 Thrice hail, then, to the Moslem’s easy creed,
 Who, sitting on a carpet, sees the strife,
 And wonders at the hearts that burn and bleed !
 Oh, fool, to hold a world’s applause thy meed !
 Oh, fool, to strive, to weep, to do, to dream,
 And perish failing in some mighty deed !
 The wise men idly sit beside the stream,
 And laugh to see the foolish wreck, the futile scheme.”

5

With words like these we wore the long years out,
 So, without faith or hope, the days went by,
 And in our minds the shadow men call—Doubt,
 On life and after life fell gloomily.
 That darkened all. They talked of Liberty !—
 We sneered, and pointed to their hidden chains :
 The loud laugh broke into the smothered sigh ;
 We with false pleasures masked too real pains,—
 Slaves round Life’s chariot-wheels, while Folly held the
 reins.

6

We had the day still, and the dark-blue night
Yet rose in all her olden mystery :
We had the trackless stars, whose awful light
Had travelled to us through Eternity,
Smiling when earth was chaos. Tyranny,
That shut men from the things that made their joy,
Taking life from them to forbid them die,
Could not, though strong, that Infinite destroy,
That shone down heaven's gold on earth's most dull alloy.

7

We heard of Italy, and in that name
Still the old witchery ; but the lyre seemed dead
From which that sound of bygone magic came ;
Only the echo lived—the hymn was fled :
By all the blood in holy causes shed,—
By the dead hero and the deathless sage,—
By every noble soul in battle sped,—
By deeds that made her past one sacred page,
We, in Italia's name, recalled the Roman's age.

8

And she was dead ! In beauty as of yore,
 Unchanged her loveliness—undimmed her smile,
 Sweet slept the Zephyrs on her fertile shore,—
 Still waved the vines about Sicilia's isle :
 And in her lonely grandeur all the while,
 Venice still funned her beauties in the sea,—
 A purple mirror for each stately pile,
 That crowned her Queen of lovely Lombardy,—
 So fair—yet dead in this—no more could she be free !

9

We tolled her death-knell in that common phrase—
 No more ! Her Carbonari—where were they ?
 Dead of the sickness of their wasted days.
 Her poet-patriot ?—Oh, how still he lay,
 Low in the English churchyard, far away
 From the loved land whose skies illumed his life,—
 Whose wrongs consumed his heart ! That bright array
 Of eager souls once burning for the strife,—
 How dwindled by despair, the prison, and the knife !

10

A thousand noble words her sons had spoken,—
 A thousand lovely dreams her sons had dreamed,—
 A thousand oaths,—loud, fervent, and yet broken,—
 A thousand swords were sheathed or e'er they gleamed,—
 A thousand lamps of theories that beamed
 And died,—and nothing done but this. Their woes
 Were doubled by their struggles, since it seemed
 Their efforts changed mere tyrants into foes,
 When, as of old some war-god, GARIBALDI rose !

11

We wait for such men,—Born of what? The hour !
 The incarnation of a people's prayer,
 They come at last—Invincible ! With power
 Wide as our want, and great as our despair,—
 Born to uphold the burden of our care,
 They come, and we believe, and gather near,
 And sun ourselves beneath the forehead, where
 God writes, “The crown of Victory is here,
 And where this man comes never yet came fear !”

12

We wait for such men—they, like living light,
 Come when the hour is darkest. It may be,
 They, with the stars, shine ever, but the night
 Alone reveals their fullest majesty.
 Then through the darkness, suddenly we see
 The pole-star of our blind and troubled way
 Shining in grand and awful mystery
 Beck'ning us onward with unchanging ray,
 Till groping through the night we reach a fairer day.

13

God had not hid Himself from Sicily !
 The night was not for ever ! Lo ! the morn
 Glimmered a speck across the lowering sky,
 Half doubted by the eyes so wan and worn,
 Quite doubted by the tyrant's sceptic scorn,
 But not the less the morn ! The standard rose—
 Hope, strange as welcome, beamed on the forlorn;
 The sword took up the chorus of men's woes,
 And Sicily's Deliverer came forth to meet her foes.

14

Her wrongs had been too deep for words, too vile
For mortal tongue to tell their villany ;
Ills had been heaped on the long-suffering isle,
Which made men traitors, only standing by
And not protesting 'gainst such treachery !
Hell militant on earth had held its reign
Here on the fertile treasure of the sea,
With kings for ministers, and human pain
The holocaust to glut the master of the fanc.

15

Her children had been slain in churches— hid,
Rotting alive behind a palace wall ;
Starved—tortured—all that devils ever did
Conceive of horror had been acted, all
That in a savage country could befall
A lonely wretch. Here in a Christian land
Deeds that a Dionysius might appal
Were daily done, while all along the strand
Men cursed the cruel heart, false soul, and ruthless hand.

16

The women waited, watching from the walls—
Watching for the Deliverer they stood,
“ Oh! will he answer to the voice that calls
A people’s want of him across the flood?
Above, about us, death and murder brood,
And none but God and he can help or save,
Our masters drown us in our kinsmen’s blood,
Our lovely isle is one Italian grave,
What wonder that we wait his advent o’er the wave?

17

“ Send him, O Lord, oh, send thy servant here,
Our sons’ right arms want strength in wanting him,
Send him, whose glance dispels the coward’s fear,
And puts new life into the feeble limb.
Death at his side will lose his aspect grim!
No longer death, but glory! Send, oh, send!
Light up the horizon where hope is dim,
That following the crest that cannot bend
Sicilia at the least may win a glorious end.

18

“ If not a triumph—let our children die,
 So they but die declaring they are free !
 There have been such death-homes in Sicily,
 That fiends in Hell may sicken as they see
 Their king outdone in hellish cruelty ;
 There have been horrors hidden from the day,
 So vile—the vile might doubt if they could be !
 And yet no earthquakes heave the lovely bay,
 No fires from Heaven come down to sweep the land away.”

19

‘The women on the walls with earnest eyes
 Looked seaward for the answer to their prayer :
 “ Oh, hear us, ‘Thou, enthroned beyond the skies,
 Thou, who alone canst fathom our despair,
 We consecrate our children young and fair,—
 Our sons, whose downy cheeks have yet their bloom,
 So that they track the tyrants to their lair,
 And by one moment haste ‘the day of doom, [tomb.”
 We will not grudge the tears that dew our loved ones’

20

He heard Who hearkens to the desolate,
 He lit the flame that fired the hero's soul,
 Until it burned with all his country's hate
 And swept earth's petty barriers of control,—
 Though o'er his path all Etna's fires should roll
 To stay the step that goeth forth to save,
 They would not hold him from the glorious goal ;
 Swiftly he journeys o'er the purple wave
 To raise Sicilia's children from their living grave.

21

And thus he answers them : — “ Italia's sons,
 Ye glorious remnants of old battles fought,
 Your wrongs are mightier than your master's guns,
 United, all things — disunited, nought ; —
 Ye need no foreign help, too dearly bought,
 No,—let your children to their children tell
 Alone their fathers' death, or freedom fought,
 Alone they conquered, and alone they fell,
 Their war-cry this — ‘ Italia and Emmanuel ! ’ ”

22

They gathered in the stillness of the night,¹
 They came from all the corners of the land,
 They met and mingled in the starry light
 In silent groups upon the ocean strand ;
 There were no shouts—they had a deed in hand
 Whose depth of purpose stilled the loud acclaim,
 And solemnly they went—that earnest band,
 Heedless of fortune, honour, laurels, fame,
 To fight, or fall and die, unknown in Freedom's name.

23

They were of every province, every grade,
 Nobles, physicians, soldiers, artists,—all,
 The student left his lamp, one left his trade,
 And one his plough, the cobbler left his stall,
 Where'er free ears had heard Sicilia's call ;
 Each came to do his part, at least to die —
 The poorest gave a life nor feared to fall —
 Falling across the path to victory,
 Shouting in death “ Emmanuel and Italy ! ”

24

There stood upon the beach a goodly throng,
 There flocked a host on the Sardinian shore;
 Around the band they came, five thousand strong,
 Strangers, who ne'er had looked on them before,—
 Dear friends, who deemed they ne'er might see them
 more :

They came to watch the brave go forth to bleed,
 To mark the aspect that their leader wore,
 Whose genius never failed in time of need,—
 Worth came the thousands, crying, with one voice, “ God
 speed ! ”

25

Men's minds held nothing else—men's hearts were filled
 With but one thought, and beat but to one theme,—
 A loud, impetuous throb, not to be stilled :
 And some despaired, and called the hero's dream
 A dream of madness,—reckless, too, his scheme.
 A cloud of fear o'er shades the Turinese.
 What if he fail ? He fail ! Oh ! could they deem
 That victory went not with him o'er the seas ?—
 Could they so soon forget Velletri and Varese ?

26

The cruifers watch to keep him from the coast ;
 The die is caſt—he's gone !—but will he land ?
 Will Naples cower before that ſlender hoſt,
 And all an army fall 'neath ſuch a band ?
 A thouſand volunteers, with ſword in hand,
 Some, ſtrangers to the ſoldier's trade,—will they
 Rear the three colours on that hoſtile ſtrand,
 And plant Sardinia's ſtandard in the bay ?
 How will they land ? —They landed in the open day !

27

Who ſays the age of miracles is paſt ?
 Who talks of Marathon—Thermopylæ ?
 They by Marſala's ſhore their anchors caſt,
 Laughing to ſcorn the watchful enemy,
 Whoſe veſſels ſtudded all that ſouthern ſea ;
 They diſembarked beneath the midday ſkies ;
 None queſtioned them,—the glorious—the free !
 Their very preſence ſeemed to paralyſe :
 Unchallenged, thus they landed 'neath their foeman's eyes

28

Throughout the Isle their coming noised abroad,
And “Victory and him!” the young men cried.
The groups of peasants on the dusty road,
The armed Guerillos on the mountain side,
Shouted his name, till, echoing o’er the tide,
That sound appalled the Bourbon’s heart of stone.
Afar then flew the tidings, far and wide,
Till the weak tyrant shivered on his throne,
Every free soul allied against him—he, alone!

29

Alone, with the worst cause that ever man
Dared to uphold against his fellow-men—
Unpitied, scorned, beneath Earth’s general ban,
The world awaiting that blest moment when
His foes shall drive him from his blood-stained den;
And rid the infected land of death and shame,
By ridding it of him. Then let him, then,
Deprived of all except his hateful name,
Drag out his days unscathed, too pitiful for blame.

30

A warning to posterity—a mark
 For the fool's wit—a blot upon his kind—
 A vile example ! He who would not hark
 The warning voices—deaf as the wind,
 Than the black night less pitying, more blind—
 Let him be this ; or let him be forgot,
 Excused as mad by crookedness of mind :
 So with his dust his memory may rot,
 And even Italy's dark records name him not.

31

A second Dionysius, with the will,
 But not the power, to work a nation's woe ;
 Inheriting his father's thirst for ill,
 But not his father's nerve to strike the blow ;
 Below the worst of tyrants, far below
 An Agathocles of old time, as one
 Who midst an army feared a single foe,
 Who dared not finish that he had begun,—
 A would-be tyrant, the base father's baser son.

32

Thus to his soldiers doth their leader speak:—
 “ Brave Chasseurs of the Alps, your mission now,
 As ever, is to battle for the weak ;
 I hold no hopes of laurels for each brow,
 Nor promise spoils of peaceful homes laid low,
 No rank, no recompense rewards the brave ;
 When past the danger and when dealt the blow,
 You will regain your hearths across the wave,
 But when the battle hour strikes, ye rise to save.”

33

The watchfires blazed upon the heights, and drew
 A fiery semicircle round the bay;
 Reflected in the ocean's purple hue,
 Deepening in splendour with the close of day.
 Low in her golden shell Palermo lay,
 Breathless, but hopeful all the waiting land ;
 While from the mountain-ranges far away,
 The armed Sicilians flew to join the band,
 And an electric thrill ran round their island strand.

Thus Garibaldi's name became a link,
 Trapani, Corleone, sent their sons—
 And gathering round that Captain, will they shrink?
 Though from the mouths of all their foemen's guns
 Hell thundered on them,—by their little ones,
 Their devastated homes, their kindred slain,
 Vile be the portion of the wretch who shuns
 To lead the headlong charge, to fire the train,
 And die lamenting that he cannot die again.

35

Forth from Marsala comes the swelling host,³
 Passing Salerni, down the terraced slope,
 Bold though each soul, the proud lip speaks no boast,
 Though each determined face is lit with hope—
 They know with thrice their strength they have to cope,
 But shrink not as across the vale they go—
 (Was this hour in their leader's horoscope?)
 Heaven help the free! They reach the broad plateau,
 And face to face they meet the closely-ferried foe!

• 36

Four guns and four battalions there arrayed,
 With Landi for their leader. O'er the plain
 Their glittering arms a blinding glory made,
 Down poured their musketry in fiery rain ;
 The *squadri* shuddering o'er their brothers slain —
 Then rose the Chasseurs of the Alps ; — the fray
 Chilled not their hearts. On, on, they charged, again,
 Against all odds, beneath the burning sky
 At the sharp bayonet's point they drove the foe away.

37

A student lad from Pavia, scarce eighteen,
 Laid first his hand upon the foeman's gun,
 His southern nature fired by the scene,
 Proud to do something where so much was done.
 (Oh, happy mother, calling such her son !)
 Oh, wondrous Leader ! 'neath whose standard rise
 Men's souls above themselves ! The day is won ;
 Calata Fimi's triumph greets the skies,
 And Naples' walls are plastered with official lies.

38

And Partenico saw these Regii fly⁵
 And rose as one strong man across their way ;
 For here had children felt their cruelty,—
 These warriors against women, strong to slay,
 And murderous hands upon the helpless lay.
 Here had they warred upon the feeble, here
 Laid low the head on which the hairs were grey,
 Making their names the synonyme for fear,
 Now those so long unpitied pitiless appear.

39

Palermo watched the distant signal lights
 As hangs the Parsec o'er the holy fire,
 They flare and flicker on the rugged heights,
 Now mount towards the skies, or now expire
 In fitful darkness, and then blazing higher
 Their red glare mingles with the mellow beams
 Of the May moonlight, as it would aspire
 To melt incorporate with those purer gleams,
 And kindle in Sicilian breasts high hopes and dreams.

•40

Loud beat men's hearts within Palermo's walls,
 They only strike not yet, because they wait :
 They wait to hear the well-known bugle calls—
 Wait their Deliverer thundering at the gate
 With the strong voice whose every tone is fate ;⁶
 " Oh, come," they cry, " free Leader of the free,
 Come to redeem us ere it be too late !
 What though the foe is strong by land and sea,
 Legions of shining angels watch and fight with thee !"

41

Still blazed the signals, watched by but a few,
 And watched by the deluded foe, they burned,
 Deep crimson 'gainst the ether's deeper blue,
 The stars to which the weary eyelids turned—
 But he—the Leader—where was he ? He spurned
 The upland moorlands with his chosen band,
 Swift hastening to the souls that for him yearned,
 O'er mountain chains and peaks on which men stand
 And sicken looking down. He flew across the land,

42

And rose at Parco, where the astonished foe
 Beheld him, as by magic, in full force,
 • This Bandellero, this Diavolo,
 Who with the eagles took his lofty course,
 And with the chamois trod the mountain gorge ;
 Again the Regii and the Free engage,—
 Again a treble host of foot and horse
 Turn on the patriot-bands their bootless rage,
 And then on peaceful homes their baffled fury wage.

43

The chief retired. Some watching that retreat,
 Trembled. Weak hearts ! What, would they, cou'
 Had he e'er led the way for flying feet ? [they doubt
 Were his the soldiers for paid slaves to rout ?
 Let the fools lie, and let the boasters shout,
 Calling defeat a victory. His foes
 Follow his track, Piano's roads about,
 While o'er the mountains once again he goes,
 And Misilmeri's reached or e'er the sun has rose. '

44

Above the ruins of a feudal hall
Which mouldering stands upon the mountain's side,
(A castle once, now with white limestone wall,
A bleaching skeleton of perished pride),
There is a plateau stretching smooth and wide,
From whence the traveller looks towards the plain,
And that long range o'er which the shadows glide,
Stretching towards Taffarana and the main,
Across luxuriant sweeps all green with waving grain.

45

Majestic rising, sternly, darkly royal,
There where for ages past its peaks have frowned,
Casting long shadows on the fertile soil,
The Gebel Rosso, o'er the broken ground
Looks threateningly, with evening sunshine crowned
A rugged king.—Mazzagna's pass is seen
Like an extinct volcano, while around
The vines festooned in garlands fondly lean
Upon the gloomy olive's deeper, darker green.

46

Here were they gathered, the Guerillo bands,
 Here weary heads were pillowed on a stone,
 While o'er the tired frame some comrade's hand
 A cloak or sheepskin here and there has thrown,
 But this is luxury almost unknown.
 Four lances and a blanket made a tent,
 To whose blest shade the Sybarites had flown ;
 While some above a smoking kettle bent, [Lent.
 Whose favoury fumes proclaimed these foldiers kept no

47

Amid a little group the hero stood,
 Turr, the Hungarian Colonel, ever by
 When danger threatens, or when noble blood
 Is needed in the cause of Italy ;
 Bixio, Carini, they were near, to die
 With the old leader whom they loved so much ;
 The General's brave and youthful son was nigh
 With wounded wrist : one leaning on a crutch—
 Illustrious land that midst thy champions numbers such ! 7

48

No mercenary cut-throats bribed to slay,
 No blind machines to work a tyrant's will,
 No base-born hirelings in a dastard's pay,
 White-coated harbingers of death and ill,
 Drunk and infuriate with the blood they spill :
 Not such as these — but men of noble soul
 Who hold the sword to save and not to kill ;
 Who ask no recompense, but to enroll
 Italia's proudest names on Fame's immortal scroll !

49

They gathered round their Leader. “ Now,” he said,
 “ The hour has come to strike for Sicily !
 For one brief *coup-de-main* that will decide
 The fate of all the isle. The people cry
 To us to give them life and liberty.
 Why should we linger ? though our numbers be
 A handful 'gainst the foe. We can but die !
 Think what three hundred did — and why should we
 Fear to essay a deed shall pale Thermopylæ ? •

50

They need small time for preparation, these
 Soldiers of liberty. The tidings run
 Swift through the camp—Hungarians, Genoese,
 The Chasseurs of the Alps—each grasps his gun,
 Ready for any fate beneath the sun.
 The avant-garde in brave Turkori's care—
 Close following the Sicilians, led by one
 La Maga. Next the Genoese, and near
 The Chasseurs of the Alps their far-famed standard bear.

51

Up to the pass in slender file they go,
 Great cactus hedges border all the way—
 A mountain-gap reveals the scene below,
 The glittering villa walls, the blushing bay,
 Bathed in the beauty of the dying day.—
 The rugged mountain-peaks for ever red
 Drank in the sun, whose last expiring ray
 Dwelt a warm halo on each stately head,
 Lingering around the loftiest ere it sped.

52

Here might the hounds for ever lose their scent,
 As of famed Enna's plain the bards have sung;
 A thousand of spring's fairest blossoms blent
 Into one fragrance, o'er the island hung;
 All tenderly the timid flow'ret clung,
 Nestling around the crag, as if it owned,
 A love for the rough bosom whence it sprung,
 Wreathing the breast whereon the clouds were throned,
 And creeping to the base by the blue ocean zoned.

53

The echoes of the evening gun had died
 Amidst the mountains. Clear the moon arose,
 Flooding with silver all the brown hill-side,
 A fairy lamp to light them to their foci.
 Wild, rude, and dangerous, was the way they chose,
 Across a mountain torrent's stony bed;
 Now in the track of the cascade it goes,
 Now o'er great rocky masses; but one led
 That band, who had well-nigh made soldiers of the dead.

54

And led *them* on to victory. The men
Scarce knew their Captains in the doubtful light.
Singly they went, and only halted when
They reached the plain below. The quiet night
Beheld them arrayed there, in gathered might ;
Thence to the road, then onward towards the gate,—
Dawn on the Squadri's lances glimmers bright,
Another hour had been perchance too late —
“Strike, brothers, on each blow depends a brother's fate.

55

Roused by the Squadri's loud evvivas rise
The guard upon the bridge, then hot and fast,
O'er every head the whistling volley flies ;
Loud sounds the alarm, shrill peals the trumpet blast ;
Scatheless as yet the Band—the road is past —
Across the torrent bridge the masses pour—
Past fire from loopholed walls, whence shells are cast —
Yet few are wounded, as they hurry o'er,
Heedless of foes behind or ordnance ranged before.

56

Turkory, first to cross the barricade,⁸
And gain the town, falls wounded in the knee,
The avant-garde a furious charge has made
Along the pathway leading to the sea.
Driving the foe before them,—'gainst the Free,
The hireling soldiers of Bombino's force
Are reeds against a rock, the colours three,
Sardinia's ensign waves, and loud and hoarse
Peal the evvivas as they hold their onward course.

57

Now past the cannon's roar, and hissing balls,
Within the market-place unharmed he stands,⁹—
Low at his feet a rescued people falls,
He, the Deliverer, Captain of the bands,
Whose deeds go forth to all the wondering lands,
He, the Avenger, he, their hope, is here;
They cling around his knees, they clasp his hands,
Oh, friend! oh, champion! never more shall fear
Or slavery approach, with Garibaldi near!

58

Their Liberator ! Forth the surging crowd
Pours like an ocean gathering round his feet,
And he, their centre, gravely, sadly proud,
Watches the thousands rush from square and street,
With but a look the conqueror to greet,
The conqueror of tyranny—the foe,
Who with a hundred, can a legion meet,
Whose single arm can lay the oppressor low,
And crush a dynasty with one decisive blow.

59

Guerillo ! Bandit !—they have called him these,
The nations standing by to watch him fail
Or triumph friendless. Over all the seas
Goes forth the record of his work. Then, hail !
Hail for the man for whom hope seemed so frail,
The sober called him mad—now loud and long
Men's pæans for the glory that may pale
The days of Chivalry, the deeds of song ;
All hail to him, the brave, the dauntless, and the strong !

60

And strong by what? By numbers, or by arms?
Strong by the aid of a full treasury?
By hope of gain, which many a bosom warms,
Tempting the soldier on to do and die,
For some fair glittering bauble seeming nigh?
Strong by such things as these?—no, strong in faith,
In boundless love for trampled Italy,
In singleness of purpose, strong as death,
What cared he for applause from man's most fickle breath?

61

He was no actor on a petty stage,
No gladiator fighting for a prize,
No paid destroyer simulating rage,
Urged on by the spectators' eager cries.—
His stage the earth, his audience in the skies,
And for the world—what though the thumbs go down?
He failing to set free the Sicilies,
What though the umpire should withhold the crown,
The cause which he believes in is its own renown.

62

Oh ! we who cry *cui bono*, let us own
 These are Earth's great ones—these who can—
 Men who have died on seeing overthrown [believe
 Some noble work they lived but to achieve,—
 Who in all dreams one changeless purpose weave,
 Born to redeem the land that gave them birth—
 Men who an age of dastards will retrieve
 With one immortal deed,—who hold it worth
 One earnest life to break the chains of all the Earth !

63

We, the spectators,—we, who dropping back
 Bet on the race we have not strength to run—
 We, who abjure the torture and the rack
 Which wait on those who in that race have won,—
 We, listless idlers, weary of the sun,—
 We, who with epigrams assail the skies,
 And trifle round the questions which we shun
 To ask or answer ; — we — are we the wise ?
 Or he who dreams and hopes, who loves, believes, and dies !

64

Still the same climax,—Death alike to all.
 Be strong, achieve, O Warrior! while ye may,
 Or ere the pitcher by the fountain fall,
 While yet the sun has his familiar ray,
 While yet the starry night succeeds the day,
 Ere God reclaim the spirit which He gave,
 To light the perishing and feeble clay.
 Death, hold ye back awhile,—he comes to save—
 Pale horse and paler rider, spare the true and brave!

65

Yet hold aloof, and pass by him as one
 Thou dar'st not touch; who, marvellous as great,
 Has yet a work that must and shall be done,
 However far the end—however late
 The day of perfect triumph. He is Fate,
 Italia, Union, Glory, Freedom, Life:
 Extinction of a race beneath men's hate,
 The future with all hopeful visions rife,
 All hang on him who leads and glorifies the strife.

66

O coming day, fore-shadowed to the eyes
 Of all who love the cities of their birth,
 When from her scattered ashes shall arise
 The undivided glory of the earth,—
 Her voice regaining all its olden worth,
 Her influence extended through the world,
 Her vine-clad hills and valleys loud with mirth,
 On every sea one sacred flag unfurled,
 And to their native Chaos all her tyrants hurled.

67

Ere noon Palermo is well-nigh their own :¹⁰
 Then pours the vengeance of the pitiless,
 And the weak hand whose power to hold hath gone,
 Knows still it hath the power to oppress,
 And to the last will use it. Loud distress,
 The wail of desolated homes, the cry
 Of those whose hearths are as a wilderness
 Of ruin and destruction, greet the sky,
 While wounded women seek a spot where they may die

68

Oh, merciless ! was it not brave to wreak
The maddened hate of thy malignant soul,
With weak and foolish vengeance on the weak ?—
Thou couldst destroy, though powerless to control.
Over the lovely town thy thunders roll,
Thy cannons rain destruction upon all,
Through ruined streets War's dreadful tocsins toll,
The red-hot shells assail the shattered wall,
And still on Garibaldi's name the dying call.

69

And seeing what thou art, his sheltering arm
Takes a new strength to set the wretched free.
Thou harbinger of death and every harm,
'Twere something to have freed mankind of thee ;
There, in thy lovely lair beside the sea,
Which thou hast made a charnel-house, there yet
An awful day of reckoning shall be,—
Then shalt thou see the free-born nations met,
And the wide world in one array against thee set.

70

Over the broken roofs, the shivered walls,
 Shrouding the shrouded dead, all mournfully
 The dusky shadowed southern twilight falls,
 And the low sun's last lingering glories die.
 There, where a fountain babbles to the sky,¹¹
 There Garibaldi sleeps, or rests, for sleep
 Falls seldom on that grave and earnest eye;
 His dreams are trances more than dreams, so deep
 The thoughts which haunt him in each night-watch he
 doth keep.

71

Through the Italian evening softly beams,
 By every casement a low feeble star,
 Dim as the doubtful glories of our dreams,
 And tremulously glittering; while afar
 Lamps shimmer slender as some crystal spar,
 While through clear ether blazing shells still rush,
 And beautify the scene they cannot mar—
 Loud joy-bells on the evening breezes gush,
 And saved Palermo mocks the tyrant's power to crush.

•72

Morn breaks above the sleepless town. The cries
 Of liberated prisoners,—left to rot
 In dungeons 'neath the Bourbon's rule,—arise
 To testify against the tyrant. What!
 Can it be thus, men free, and chains are not?
 The prison-doors break down before the mob;
 Men whom their fellow-men had half forgot
 Embrace their altered children. Who would rob
 The General's heart of one exultant throb?

73

This sun that gilds the ruined streets is not
 As other suns,—it shines upon the free!
 New loveliness adorns the loveliest spot,
 The changing cloud, the opal-tinted sea,
 The waving vine, the sheltering olive-tree,
 All, all are fairer, the blue heavens smile
 New skies upon a new-born Sicily,
 Sardinia's colours crest each stately pile,
 And Freedom reigns in the regenerated Isle.

And men may breathe,—aye, even think and speak!
 Oh, wondrous strange!, and can such things be true?
 Can there be kings who trample not the weak,
 Nor stain with murder their imperial blue?—
 Kings men may trust, nor live that trust to rue,—
 Kings who rejoice not in the blood they spill,
 Kings yet not butchers, who in all they do
 Consult the subjects whom they love, and still
 Bear in their own free breasts a free-born people's will?

King of the prisoners! scarce one little year
 Since thou wert new to the Sicilian throne,
 To thee the eyes long dimmed with many a tear,
 Were turned as to the dawn. The tyrant gone,
 The future was before thee. Thou, alone,
 With power to tread the path thyself shouldst choose,
 Oh, rising star! how mightest thou have shone,—
 How mightest thou have set the prisoners loose,
 And with thy power redeemed that power's bygone abuse!

76

It was so easy for thee. Thou wert young,
 And shouldst be pitiful, and might be kind.
 How hopefully on thee the wretched hung,
 O base, O heartless, pitiless, and blind,
 O given over to the insensate mind !
 Couldst thou not see the course that seemed so plain,
 Know'st thou the golden crown thou hast resigned ?
 Thou who disdainest o'er the free to reign,
 And deem'st thy highest bliss thy trampled people's pain.

77

If thou hadst had one spark of mercy, thou,
 Succeeding one so truly mercilefs,
 Thou might'st have won men's warmest love ; and now,
 So hast thou revelled in thy kind's distress,
 So hast thou loved to torture and oppress,
 Thy very father is preferred to thee,
 As not the worst. His direst foes confess
 Thou hast surpassed e'en him in villany,
 Paling his blackest deeds by blacker treachery

78

Stayed in the very torrent of success,
 The General grants the foe an armistice.
 What! Lanza and his compeers! they confess,
 They come to him, the bandit, crying, "Peace!
 Let the humiliating struggle cease—
 We have but numbers, cannon, force, and might,
 An army which we every hour increase
 Gathering in strength to crush thee. Thou hast right,
 And men whose hearts are in the cause for which they fight."

79

Oh, wonder-working hero! thou hast swept
 An army from thy path as sweeps the blast
 The leaves that check its course, and thou hast stept
 Forth from the chaos of the troubled past,
 Gathered thy little band, thy gauntlet cast
 In the pale tyrant's teeth; and in the field
 Spell-bound by thine old prestige, scared, aghast,
 Divisions crumble, the trained captains yield,
 And leave the people thine to save, to rule, to shield.

80

Then Garibaldi re-collects his force,
 Discards the useless, and arrays the brave.
 With slender arms that suit the mountain course
 O'er which their path will lead them by the wave,
 On to Messina. Little do they crave
 To fit them for the war—these Spartans hold
 Hardship and famine in contempt—they have
 Small need of heavy knapsacks, reckless, bold,
 As they who fought by Aristomenes of old.

81

He has no need to strike upon the ground,
 His standard is the centre of the isle.
 New foldiers gathering every hour around,
 Catch valour from the lustre of his smile,
 And truth from those proud eyes that know not guile,
 And make themselves his slaves. What art is this?
 What cunning power or what enchanter's wile,
 Which wins each heart until it beats as his?
 And the worst death for him seems but a foldier's bliss!

82

The genius of the captain, in whose breast
 Beats the wide heart of nations, not of man,
 Who feels each hope that animates the rest,
 Fulfils what others only dream,—who can
 Breathe in one word a trodden people's ban
 And make that word a thunderbolt. Who dares
 What without him a thousand ne'er began —
 Whose sceptle's ears can hear a nation's prayers,
 And fathom all their woes, and pity all their cares.

83

“The Washington of Italy!” Ah, well
 He chose thy name, who called thee, hero!¹² so
 Like his, thy deeds are such that those who tell
 Of thee or him speak poetry, nor know
 How to find words which do not fall below
 Thy deeds, as other deeds do fall. Thou art!
 Why should we wonder why thou art, although
 Thou art so wonderful? It is thy part
 To be the living answer to each anxious heart.

84

Above man—as an instrument of God—
 A Moses to these children of despair,
 Leading them through tempestuous deeps dry-shod ;
 Haste, Champion, to that shore so lovely fair
 That wants alone thy standard on the air
 To make its perfect loveliness sublime.
 Onward, immortal one ! The sword ye bear
 Is not for rest,—through life's departing prime
 I'hou with eternal glory vanquishest dull Time.

85

Thou testifiest God's unfailing truth,
 Thou, coming to us in our hour of need—
 Thy humble birth, thy unregarded youth,
 Thy shipwrecked comrades saved. Each daring deed
 An embryo hero's ! With how little heed
 The loud world passed thee by, unheard thy name,
 Till, lo ! the chains are loosed, the slaves are freed,
 The days of all the Cæsars put to shame,
 And Earth refounding with the thunder of thy name.

86

They go, the troops of Francis ; ere they part,
 O'er every roof Sardinia's colours float ;
 The church, the convent towers, the palace, mart,
 The castle walls, the fisherman's frail boat,
 All have their ensigns, while from every throat
 Swells the loud welcome of the rescued seven,
 And some few murmurs in the crowd devote
 That parting force to—anywhere but Heaven :
 They go—the white sails spread—and all our chains are
 riven.

87

The prisoners meet their friends.¹³ Oh, wildly glad
 They gather round these loved ones, nearly lost,
 And all the city, as one man gone mad,
 Shrieks its farewell to that departed host,
 And will rejoice although forbade to boast.
 From every casement women throw down flowers,
 The very air is thick with blossoms tost
 About the prisoners' heads—the streets are bowers,
 And the free soldiers march beneath the fragrant shower

88

And he, their saviour, clasps them to his breast,
 These seven. Folded to that noble heart,
 Are they or he the most entirely blest?
 Up to the General's eyes unbidden start
 The tears he cannot check. His lips just part,
 But will not form the words that he would speak.
This—Joseph Garibaldi's only art
 Beside which Cæsar's genius had been weak;
 His heart is theirs, with theirs must beat, with theirs must
 break.

89

Happy Palermo! glancing from thy shore,
 Look to the other Sicily, where lie
 The prisoners, waiting—waiting evermore
 The looked-for trial—in their agony
 Waiting man's mercy to permit them die.
 Look to fair Naples, where the high-born rot
 In stony vaults, deep hidden from the sky—
 Thy very loveliness earth's foulest spot,
 While crowded dungeons undermine thy loveliest spot.

90

Oh, Naples! thou hast been thy children's grave,
 Italia's charnel-house! Thy kings have reigned
 O'er gaolers and their victims—while the brave
 Caught terror in thy precincts, and restrained
 Each word that spoke of freedom. Thought enchained.
 Dwindled and shrunk, dwarfed by thy fatal air,
 Thy wisest fled. The wretches who remained
 Sank in a deathlike torpor of despair,
 Losing the very memory of what once they were.

91

Thought was forbidden. Men who walked abroad
 Glanced round to see the spy that skulked behind;
 The rustling trees upon the dusty road
 Had ears and could betray—the wandering wind
 Seemed as the rest, a traitor. Till the mind
 Grew mad from brooding thoughts it gave not breath,
 And none could trust his brother, but might find
 His hearth a nest of scorpions, and beneath
 The sacred roof of home the plotters of his death.

92

This is thy past, O Naples ! Canst thou rise,
And from such ashes phoenix-like ascend,
Ruffling thy re-plumed wings athwart the skies,
Bird of great promise ? Can thy sorrows end ?
Can man from memory's book those pages rend
That tell of what thou hast been, and forget,
And dream of peace within thy walls, and bend
The knee before thy king, whose robes are wet
With the life-blood of all thy martyrs dripping yet ?

93

Can men forget ? Can they return and say,
“ We trust thee, Sovereign ; blotted be the past,
It was—it is not. Welcome to the day
That breaks on night's black terror at the last.
We will forget those dungeons where were cast
Our noblest countrymen. We will erase
The memory of the blood that flowed so fast, .
(This was our grave and not our dwelling-place)
And bask in this new sunshine of unlooked-for grace.

94

“Nay, more. *We will believe thee!* Though thy fire
 And all thy race have held their oaths as air,
 We will believe thou hold’st thine honour higher,
 And that these promises, so new and fair,
 Will be regarded ;—though to our despair
 We trusted him,—in thee we still will trust ;
 Nay, we will say it was thy people’s prayer,
 And no base terror stayed thy cruel lust,
 Making thee wondrous kind when trampled in the dust

95

“We’ll look for purple grapes upon the thorn,
 For figs from thistles, and for truth from thee ;
 Though all the world should hold thee up to scorn,
 We will believe, and thou, O King, shall be
 The guardian, not the murderer, of the free.
 The prisons shall be closed, and thou shalt tread
 No more above the wretched, nor shalt see
 Thy shadowy victims hovering round thy bed,
 Colouring thy slumbers with the blood that thou hast shed

96

Messina still remained unto the foe;
 And gathered there, in concentrated force,
 Bosco awaited the decisive blow
 That should reveal the Liberator's course.
 Here were collected troops of foot and horse,
 Artillery and Riflemen, and still
 They hold Melazzo; while o'er mountain gorge,
 O'er dusty winding roads, o'er peak and hill,
 Approach the bands united by one common will.

97

All Europe standing by to watch the strife,
 Feared to foretell its issue,—“Can it be
 This new-born freedom will have so much life
 As to survive a summer; shall we see
 It fade, this brief exotic Liberty?
 Is this loud triumph only an endeavour?
 Or shall these sometime slaves indeed be free?
 And was that charge by the Ticino's river
 But the prophetic grandeur of a great for-ever?”

98

'Time only answers questions such as these.
 Oh, fair Italia! men have called thee dead,
 A lovely corpse entombed amid thy seas;
 'Thy morning glories, thy noon splendours fled,
 'Thy sun gone down, and o'er thee only shed
 Memory's cold moonlight. Why should this be so?
 Have all the hosts that all thy heroes led
 Left not one drop of blood? Art thou so low
 'Thou canst not count one honest arm to strike the blow,

99

That shall achieve thy resurrection?—not
 One arm to strike for Freedom? Thus they cried
 Who saw thee silent. Hadst thou then forgot,
 And wert content unhonoured to abide?
 Couldst thou indifferent stand, and watch the tide
 * That, ebbing past thee, bore thy pride away?
 Oh! blind dull World, so eager to decide
 On that thou knowest not! The seeming clay
 'Holds yet eternal Freedom's animating ray,

100

And shall arise and cry aloud, "I live !
 I slept, it may be, while the others strove,
 And passed me in the race. All earth could give,
 She gave to me ; she set my throne above
 The wondering nations, powerful to move
 The wide world with my sceptre's careless wave.
 Mine the rich dower of beauty, wealth, and love,
 Genius my offspring, every art my slave,
 Imperishable, I arise from out my grave ;—

101

" And here reclaim my long-abandoned place.
 Restore to me the glories that are mine,
 And let my sons' regenerated race—
 As once their ancestors—in deeds outshine
 All other nations. Let them once more twine
 Fame's deathless garland round Italia's brow,
 While purified by suffering, more divine
 Than in her proudest day, the world shall bow,
 And own she never yet was half so fair as now."

102

Her beauty shall be union ! Lovely ! One !
 Her scattered laurels bound into one wreath,
 Her parted stars in one immortal sun,
 Her myriad voices in one mighty breath,
 Her many creeds in one devoted faith !
 This — this shall be her concentrated might,
 This her new life, that from the realms of death
 And darkness shall uplift her to the light !
 Her trampled states for triumph need but to unite.

103

And thou, Emmanuel, be our warrior King;
 So mighty is thy mission, thou shouldst rise
 To grandeur more than mortal ! Thou didst bring
 Hope with thine advent. On thee Europe's eyes
 Are turned to worship, pity, or despise ;—
 We ask so much from greatness ; do not shake
 The world's faith in thee ! Fearless, true, and wise,
 Hold the bright course it was thine own to take,
 And ere thou bend'st thy sceptre, let that sceptre break.

104

Be that thou hast been,—be thyself alone !
 Not great on sufferance ; let no other hand
 Hold the foundations of Sardinia's throne,
 Now, willing it to totter, now to stand,
 Thou viceroy, and not monarch of the land.
 Let none support thy splendour, nor declare
 Thine Empire built upon the shifting sand
 Of great allies — who, where they help must share,
 And only let thee hold what their strong grasp can spare.

105

July beheld Sicilia's struggle end
 In glory at Melazzo. Here the foe
 Were gathered. Here had Bosco sworn to send
 Medici's columns where the waves should flow
 Above the patriots' heads, and level low
 Rebellious Barcellona's shattered wall.¹⁴
 Here Garibaldi struck the final blow,
 Led the free troops collected by his call,
 And hastened the vast climax of the tyrant's fall.

There had been brief encounters ere they met
 On that great day that ended the campaign ;
 The foe had charged Medici, the sun set
 And saw them try to take the slopes in vain ;
 Against all force, his columns could maintain
 Their General's position. Tidings flew
 Telling the strife—the number of the slain—
 And in Palermo the Dictator knew
 Melazzo's work remained for him alone to do.¹⁵

This is the inspiration of the great,
 The inborn resolution of the strong,
 That sets a man abreast with pauseless Fate—
 Far, far before the undecided throng
 That halt to dream and ponder on a wrong
 Before they strike to right it. Like the sun,
 He holds his course, nor weighs his purpose long :
 To pause is half to fail. Great works begun
 Can know no resting-place until the work be done.

108

And he is with them ! Victory with him
 Hath sped across the mountains and is here—
 Here, where the foe are gathered, and where grim
 Melazzo's citadel o'er plain and mere
 Frowns on their slender columns. He is near !
 What though Messina's strength, but half confest,
 Outnumbers theirs six-fold ? They proudly rear
 His standard, and await the coming test
 That shall declare if they or royal slaves be best,

109

On the free battle-field. The summer morn
 Peeps o'er the mountain-tops. The dewy sod
 Trembles with flowers, lonely, not forlorn,
 In solitudes where men have seldom trod,
 And where the slender stems, dew-laden, nod—
 Kissing their shadows. Drifting o'er the sea,
 The sun comes forth from ocean as a God ;
 Wrapped in sea-robes of regal purple, he
 Comes from the rippling deep to shine o'er mount and lea.

I K O

And is it well to stain the tender grass
 And drown the flowers in blood, and hand to hand
 Die, rolled together in the mountain-pass
 In hate's last wild embrace? Is this free band,
 Here met to fall or to maintain its stand,
 A troop of martyr-heroes? Surely, yes,
 Think of the horrors of this tortured land!
 Think! yesterday they were! And then confess,
 Ye who cry "Peace!" no true-born men could well do
 '—iefs,

I I I

Than these men have done. Let the morning shine,
 This is no shame the orb of day doth see!
 He never yet beheld men more divine
 Than when they die to set their brothers free.
 Has he not looked on hopeless misery?
 And smiles he not on those who would redeem
 The sorrows of their sisters? What! shall he,
 Who shone on Marathon, withhold his beam
 From these whose deeds recall that old and hallowed dream?

112

Where by Melazzo many roads are met
 And form one centre, had the foe arrayed
 His forces. There his riflemen were set
 In gardens covered by the olive's shade,
 And trailing vines whose verdant garlands made
 An ambush whence they scattered death unseen—
 Divided here, the guns, upon whose aid
 Bosco relied for victory, between
 The loopholed walls peeped from the foliage green.

113

Here, strong in a concentric battle-ground,
 The foe was gathered. Then Sicilia's might,
 Half formed of peasants from the country round,
 And their free leaders, met beneath the light,
 And set themselves in order for the fight.
 The left by Malenchini led—a band
 Of Tuscans and recruits. Then on the right,
 At Arelis, Fabrizio took his stand,
 While Malenchini skirted by the ocean strand.¹⁶

114

Advancing on Melazzo's guarded town,
 The centre, by Medici marshalled, bent
 Its way to meet the right, still bearing down
 Upon Melazzo. Santa Lucia sent
 One more battalion, while from Miri went
 Medici's brave Lombardian troops ; thus they
 Went forth to meet their enemies, content
 To die to swell the glory of the day,
 And from his latest strongholds drive the foe away.

115

But ere they parted, thus their leader's heart
 Burst forth into the music of the scene ;
 And with that unpremeditated art,
 Which in such natures ever sleeps serene,
 Cradling the poet 'neath the warrior's mien,
 He wove the glorious moment in a song,
 Whose clear notes rang the open ranks between ;
 Fusing new ardour in the ardent throng
 Until the strongest there felt more than ever strong :

“ Descendants of the Roman age !

Your foes shall fly before your rage, .

Since God is with the war ye wage,

For life and liberty.

He, 'neath the thunder of whose breath,

Ere Israel's sword had left its sheath,

The fierce Assyrian sunk in death, '

Shall fight and watch for ye.

“ Then by that past whose days are flown,

By that fair future all your own,

By yonder Despot's falling throne,

Italia shall be free !

By all your kinsmen foully slain,

By every tortured prisoner's pain,

By every vow believed in vain,

Onward for victory !

“ Your shivered chains re-forged shall make

The swords which other chains shall break

. Your concentrated might shall shake .

The tyrant from his throne.

The land your God hath made so fair,
'He made not for the foe to share,
And will not ye some danger dare
To claim and keep your own?

“But should there live amidst thy sons,
One traitor who the conflict shuns,
One wretch who fears the foeman's guns,
No soldier shall he be.
Leave him his distaff! Let him fly
From those who strike for Italy,
And hold it little loss to die,
So that they perish free.

“Sleepers, awake! Show other lands,
The Roman sword within your hands
Can ring old music round your strands,
As when the eagles spread
Their wings above the Eastern dome,
O'er Afric's sands, o'er Britain's home,
Till all the world was only — Rome!
And they have called ye dead,

These conquerors of yesterday,
(O'er whom thine Emperors held sway,
Despising their barbaric prey,
In centuries gone by.

Oh, sons of glory, rise! Once more
Be what ye were in days of yore,
And from the mountain to the shore
Re-conquer Italy !''

116

At dawn the columns started, and ere long¹⁷
The earliest shots were heard. Upon the beach
The foe's artillery poured amid the throng
With terrible effect. Within the reach
Of cannon mouths that peeped through every breach
In the long garden walls, the troops advanced
And gained the gardens, where each, hid from each—
Fighting with phantom foes whose bullets glanced
From out their leafy cover—struck where'er he chanced.

117

And he, the Leader, where was he? Where'er
 The fight was thickest and the danger most;
 Where'er there was some reckless chance to dare,
 Some peril past all perils, which might cost
 His life who should essay it—here the host
 Was led by Garibaldi! He was not
 In one place, but a hundred places—lost
 Now for an instant—rising on some spot [shot
 Where none looked to behold him, 'neath the forms o

118

He was the spirit of the fight, although
 Medici's orders marshalled all the men.
 His was the soul that prompted every blow;
 He was amidst the battling centre, when
 The tidings came the left was threatened, then
 Taking the sole reserve, in the command
 Of Colonel Dunne, he flew to turn again
 The tide of victory—and with this small band,
 Half English, half Italian, fought them hand to hand.

119

Onward they hurried, though the cannon swept
 The road before them — first to cross the wall
 An English sailor through the mêlée leapt
 And seized a gun; when rose the frantic call,
 Whose sound the younger troops could still appal,
 “Cavalry! Cavalry!” They spring aside
 Opening the way, where, trampling over all,
 The Chasseurs à Cheval in triumph ride,
 And threaten once again to stem the battle’s tide.

120

Sabring to right and left, they tried to gain
 The gun and to recapture it. Then rose,
 Recovering, the infantry — and vain
 The wasted efforts of their mounted foes;
 Thick fell on either side the clanging blows
 Emptying the saddles. Few remained to fly
 After that rapid conflict’s bloody close;
 Those, Garibaldi met on foot, none nigh
 Save Missori, to share the hard-won victory.

121

Alone, with sword in hand, across the way
He flung himself; there where the Chasseurs rode—
Holding the flying chargers all at bay,
Despite their frenzied rider's frantic goad;
Ere well Miffiori could his pistols load,
He bade the foe surrender—but in vain;
In fierce defiance of each warlike code
The captain struck at him—he seized the rein,
And parrying clove the traitor's crested helm in twain.

122

With one more effort of his conquering arm—
Miffiori flew the others, and so brief
The sanguinary contest, no alarm
Spread through the ranks, although awhile their chief
Stood in such peril. One more laurel leaf
Was gathered here to grace his laden brow;
But who shall doubt there fell a shade of grief
E'en o'er this victory, he remembering how
These were his countrymen his prowess had laid low?

123

This fired the troops upon the left, who came
Up with the centre ; but the hardest part
Of this hard struggle yet remained, and Fame,
That lauds the brilliant stroke—the Captain's art,
May here set down the soldier's dauntless heart,
The changeless purpose of the meanest there,
'Th' indomitable spirit, which the dart
Of Death could not extinguish, but would glare
Out of the glazing eyes of those he would not spare.

124

Here, hand to hand for weary hours they strove ;
Here was it brave Migliavacca fell,
In the mad torrent of the fight, where love
Stays not to sound the parting spirit's knell—
The battle-field one wild, chaotic hell ; —
On poured the Cacciatori, in whose grasp
The bayonets did their fatal purpose well,
Here, sword in hand, entwined in War's fell clasp,
They smile hate's horrid smile to mark the dying gasp.

125

There, where the thicket's shades were darkest, rushed,
Driving the foe before, the Genoese ;
From many a fearless breast the life-blood gushed,
Shot by the Regii hid beneath the trees.
Mad with wild rage against such foes as these,
Who flew their comrades from the olive's shade,
Onward they sprang upon their prey to seize,
Casting aside the musket for the blade,
They broke through scattered vines 'neath which the slain
were laid.

126

And charging, 'gainst their Captain's orders, gained
A loopholed wall, from which the pelting shot,
Now grape, now canister, above them rained.
On sped they towards some vulnerable spot,
But only neared the guns, whose mouths their hot
Death vomited upon them. Still defying,
They leapt upon the foe, who waited not
Their bayonets, but to their stronghold flying
Left the abandoned ground whereon their dead were lying.

Garibaldi.

'The day was won—Melazzo's fight was o'er !
Here the false Despot's bravest soldiers fell :
And, sadly failing from the fatal shore,
Bosco returned, the dire defeat to tell.
Here, buried Tyranny's departing knell
Was tolled in War's hoarse thunder : shivered here
The last link in the chain. From citadel,
Barrack, and fortress, the troops disappear,
And glad Messina sees the Conqueror draw near,

128

And as a city rising from the dead,
Most lovely in her resurrection, wakes
From simulated apathy, for dread
Had sealed her people's lips ; but now she breaks
The spell that bound her silence, till she shakes
The welkin with the tempest of her bliss :
“ Oh, thou Redeemer, for our children's sakes,
The foot that trampled tyranny we kiss,—
Proud but to kneel about thee in an hour like this !”

129

They gather round : the love they scarce can speak
 Is eloquent in sobs and outcries wild ;
 Warm glows the rapture in each southern cheek,
 The strong man weeping with the little child,—
 The weak grown strong,—the sternest soldier mild
 As the pleased infant he lifts up to see
 The glory round the hero ! Undeiled
 By coarser prizes, these,—yes, these shall be,
 O Joseph Garibaldi, Heaven's reward to thee !

130

God, and not man, thy paymaster. He pays
 Thy love by love ! A rescued people's tears,—
 The very children's voices lisping praise,—
 These be thy tribute ! Through the lengthening years,
 When beautified by distance, worth appears
 Lovelier as more remote, thy name shall rise,
 And by man's ignorance fading in these spheres,
 In cloudless majesty adorn the skies,—
 Thou counted with the Gods in Time's adoring eyes !

131

Thy story blended with the mythic deeds
Of old Homeric heroes ; so, the Earth,
Through all her varying phases, changing creeds,
Shall yet retain the record of thy worth,
Part of her poetry ; and in the dearth
Of others like to thee, thy fame shall shine,
Till poets frame a fable for thy birth,—
The supernatural with the true entwine,
And say, thou hadst not been, hadst thou not been divine !

132

Land of the Bloody Vespers ! can it be
Thy wrongs, thy sufferings are as things gone by ?
Regenerate, reorganised, and free,
How shall we know thee, sunny Sicily,
Invested in this crown of liberty,
One man's deep love hath won for thee ! We gaze
Backward o'er many a painful century,
And see again thine old heroic days,
When every legend told, thy lord, Count Roger's praise.

Garibaldi.

133

Or further back : the Greek usurps thy soil,
And lords it in thy Syracusan street ;
The classic tyrant makes thy wealth his spoil,
And Athens prays assistance of thy fleet
To crush the Persian ; while the heathen meet
Within thy temples, and thy market-place
Is busy with the helots' hurrying feet,
While gazing on each dark and glowing face
The stranger marks thy citizens' Hellenic race.

134

For lovely from the first, thou wert the prize
Grasping ambition yearned to seize upon :
When Etna's earliest thunders met the skies,
And mocked with fiercer fires the blazing sun,
Thy sod was trampled and thy strife begun :
The Carthaginian's mercenary horde,
On that great day when Salamis was won,
Met on thy soil stern Syracuse's lord,
And fled before the might of Gelon's vengeful sword

135

Again the Carthaginian fought thy strand
 And found thee—as thou wert but yesterday,
 Ill governed, disunited, through the land
 War's ravage spread, Selinus owned his sway;
 Yielding Himera swelled the invaders' prey,
 When, hastening to thee with his slender fleet,
 Mooring his triremes in Messina's bay,
 Hermocrates returned thy foes to meet,
 And die by Faction's hand in Syracuse's street.

136

In later years Count Roger gave thee laws,
 Thy Norman constitution was thy boast,
 Thy voice was loudest then in Freedom's cause,
 Till Benevento's blood-stained field was lost,
 And Manfred slain amidst the fallen host.
 Then by the Roman hierarch wert thou given,
 A prey to the fierce Angevin, tumult-tost;
 Till on one dreadful night thy bonds were riven,
 And thy loud Vespers rose to tell thy wrongs to Heaven.

137

The Spaniard ruled thee. In Palermo's fane,
 The Austrian Cæsar pledged his faith to thee,
 And kept his vow. Nor Charles' nor Philip's reign
 Saw thy laws broken. Beautiful and free
 Wert thou among the nations, Sicily,
 When, for thy sins of ages, on thee fell
 God's wrath, incarnate in the Bourbon, he
 Who rang in blood thy boasted Freedom's knell,
 Until thy woes wrung pity from the deeps of Hell.

138

The wanderers by the Styx might pity thee,
 For they deserved their tortures, thou didst not,
 Abandoned to the studied cruelty
 Of thy first Ferdinand, whose follies blot
 Even a Bourbon scutcheon. Unforgot
 Thy new Commodus vending peasants wine;
 Leaving his wife to scheme, to kill, to plot,
 Till execration learned to intertwine
 His hated name with that of Austrian Caroline.

139

And she, thy female scourge, than man more vile,
Peopled thy shores with spy and parasite,
Lured thee to ruin with her fatal smile ;
Until her little hand, so lovely white,
Was dreaded as the deadliest to smite.
An exile from thine outraged shores she died,
And still they tell the horrors of the night,
When, stricken in her blind unpitying pride,
Her vile heart broke to find her blood-stained claims denied.

140

And freed from her, so strong in hope wert thou,
Thou deem'dst thou might'st be happier—to find
Another foot upon thy neck, to bow
To a new tyrant, eager but to bind
Thy chains afresh, and to the wandering wind
Fling princely promises. “How long, O Lord !
Have we not suffered, yet have been resigned ;
This second Ferdinand had we adored,
But when we pressed around, he met us with his sword.”

141

Thy sin has been thy guilefulness ; the base
Won thee with lies to sheathe thine eager blade :
Messina's devastated market-place,—
Her palaces — her lovely temples laid
In ruins o'er the spot that once they made
Sicilia's glory,—in such signs as these,
The hand that only terror ever stayed
Wrote its eternal shame. Thine agonies
Brief by man's lasting scorn for thy vile enemies.

142

And thou art free ! Shall all in this be said,
And wilt thou not be glorious beside ?—
By all thy patriots numbered with the dead,—
By all thy youngest sons who proudly died,
And drifting down the swift and darkening tide,
In the loud clamour of the hurrying fight,
The hot blood gushing from the wounded side,—
Still held thine image in their souls, so bright,
Its splendour drowned the darkness of approaching night

143

If not for those who live, for they who fell,
Be glorious, oh, Sicilia ! Yes, for those
Who loved thee in thy misery so well,
They deemed thee dearer, with thy crown of woes,
Than happier islands crowned with flowers ! rank grows
The grass above Melazzo's graves. Oh, how
Wilt thou not break thy patriot's repose,
If thou shouldst fail to grace thy glory now,
Or tarnish the new laurels gathered for thy brow !

144

Thine hour has dawned, Italia ! Long and late
This wondrous morning, but behold the beam !
Seize, ere it turn, the flood-tide of thy fate,
And drift to glory down the rushing stream.
Thou hast but to drift backward. Did men deem
Thou couldst not be again what thou hast been,
Or hadst so fallen in thine own esteem,
Since on the confines of the world was seen
The grandeur of thine Emperor's haughty mien ?

145

And shall thy modern standard wave o'er deeds
 Less glorious than thine eagles saw of yore ;
 Or shall the Pontine Marshes' trembling reeds
 Never by warlike feet be trampled more ?
 Hath glory fled from Thrasymane's shore,
 Though hosts of heroes sleep beside her waves ?
 Hath Rome forgot to wield the sword she bore ?
 Is her soul buried in her children's graves ?
 And shall the Cæsars' dust be trod by priestly slaves ?

146

And wilt thou only, while the rest are free,
 Still wear thy fetters ? Still forbear to break
 The bands that hold thy strength from victory ;
 Wilt thou still carry for tradition's sake
 The chains thou needst but to arise, to shake
 From off thy loins ? Oh, thou, of old sublime,
 Wilt thou of all be latest to awake,
 And in new-born Italia's modern prime,
 Vilt thou alone recoil from the proud march of Time !

147

Shall all the world be glorious—yet thou,
 'Thou mother of all glory, wilt thou stand
 Aloof to watch the laurels from thy brow
 Fall to be gathered by a meaner hand?
 Shall deeds once thine, uplift a lower land?
 Arise and cry aloud, “Emmanuel, come!”
 Peal the loud blast along the Tiber's strand,
 Sound thy war-trumpets 'neath St. Peter's dome,
 Till the old days return and Rome again be Rome.”

148

Italians! Brief as bright has been your glory,
 Ye have recalled the old heroic days,
 And better pens than mine will leave to story,
 Your modern triumphs, your new blooming bays:
 To me your deeds are so above all praise,
 My heart's throb stays the hand with which I write; ,
 But with the million voices mine I raise, ,
 And shape that magic word for thee, “Unite!”
 Let one heart prompt the blow, though every arm may finite.

149

“To-day be soldiers, ye shall be to-morrow
 Free citizens of a free land,” he said,
 Whose heart turned to thee in thine hour of sorrow,
 Who by Ticino’s wave his legions led,
 And struck the blast that raised thee from the dead.
 The world would have thee doubt him—it may be
 Inscrutable the workings of that head;
 But if his precepts help ye to be free,
 Count something his this Pallas-birth of Liberty.

150

And he who has redeemed thee—he has risen
 So far beyond man’s greatness, words were vain!
 The vacant throne—the sunlight in the prison
 Streaming through open doors—the shivered chain—
 The long farewell to Francis and to pain,—
 The shattered wheel, which erst, to wide Earth’s shame,
 Marked in the judgment-hall the Bourbon’s reign,—
 These be the only records of his fame,
 Since titles would but mar the Liberator’s name!

151

Princes and Emperors have been before,
And have been scourges. He shall stand alone,
As one who on men's lips no title bore,
But graved his name a nation's heart upon !
All baser circlets may his brow disown,
Heavy with garlands he himself hath weaved :
Lo, when his sum of victory is done,
Only by kingly hands shall be received
That sword whose blade Italia's Freedom hath achieved.

152

Let that, Emmanuel, be thy talisman,
And double glory glimmer on the blade,—
Italia's conquests may be but begun ;
As swiftly as th' immortal blue-eyed maid
Sprang forth in armed majesty arrayed,
So suddenly Italian freedom springs,
Jove-born, triumphant ! Let this new decade
Replume the Roman eagle's shivered wings,
Thou, first of a long line of free Italian kings !

153

And mightier than the Roman potentate,
 Whose wide dominion was the world, be thou,
 Who from thy boyhood, by an instinct great,
 Shalt reap the laurels sown so long ago,
 And wear them ere the wrinkles line thy brow.—
 Oh, dream of glory ! Every bygone flight
 The land ere suffered, is avengèd now !
 Once more she claims her long-abandoned right,
 And bids the world allow her re-established might.

154

What shall be said of her ? Why, only this :
 Too long she slept,—this should have been before.
 Oh, wasted centuries, though new-born bliss
 Laughs through the land to change to tears no more,
 Long ere to-day her tears should have been o'er !
 Her champions had not come to her. They came,—
 The deathless peal resounded on the shore,
 And echoed in the mountains !—Wrong and shame
 Melted like snow before the blaze of Freedom's flame !

155

Were these the people men had called—debased?
 Was this the land the world had christened—dead?
 Too long by priestly tyrannies defaced,
 Too long enchained by the base hands they fed,
 Too many a year that should have freed them fled,
 Their name become a byword:—they arose,—
 Shook off the stupor of long years, and, led
 By the inspired Leaders whom they chose,
 Bore down with one great truth the lies of all their foes.

156

That truth is one instinctive yearning, which
 Usurps each heart, and beats in every breast.
 What! Did God make this lovely land so rich,
 To be by aliens to the soil possessed?
 One answer sets all questionings at rest;
 Italia, to be mighty, must be one,
 North, south, and east, the centre and the west,
 Each yearns to each; the work is but begun;
 The foldier-king's wide love can spare no freeborn son.

157

Not one ! While Austria holds a rood, a stain
 Sullies the lustre of th' Italian shield.
 Emmanuel, thine the glory to regain
 The sceptre an Augustus fighed to wield :
 Lo, Victory calls thee to the conquering field,
 Thou, the elect of man's unerring soul,
 Thou who the wounds of ages past hast healed,
 Around thee shall the Imperial purple roll,
 The crown lies at thy feet, so near thee is the goal.

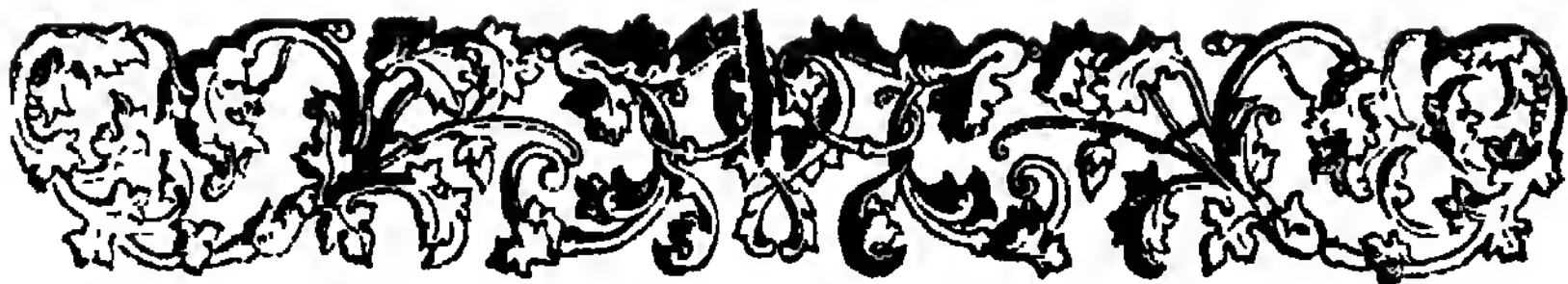
158

Till thou art crowned in Rome, we wait, we wait ;
 Through the dim future glorious shadows loom :
 Onward ! with Fortune for thine handmaid, Fate
 Thy slave, cries, " Hasten ! " all the Gods shout,
 Since first they set our images in Rome [" Come '
 Till now, we have not seen such glory." Light
 A thousand lamps to gem St. Peter's dome,
 And throne thyself beneath them, on thy right
 Let him stand whose great deeds have led thee to thy might.

159

And earth shall hold than this heroic twain
No greater heroes. Oh, immortal end !
Children, ye have not wept or bled in vain !
O King ! O Father ! and thou more than friend,
Who deem'dst thy life too small a thing to spend,
And therefore gave thine all for Italy ! —
Your double glories in one halo blend :
Plant the three colours and the cross on high,
Ye glorious authors of Italian Liberty !





NOTES TO GARIBALDI. •

NOTE 1. Page 12.

They gathered in the stillness of the night.

“THEY assembled in a beautiful night at a villa on the sea-shore, at some leagues from Genoa. They were, I am told, about two thousand in number; but what is certain is, that all the alleys of the immense garden were filled with volunteers, who moved down to the beach laden with muskets and cases of ammunition, which they placed on board boats for conveyance to the vessels in the offing, and all this without a word being spoken, except a few necessary orders, given almost in a whisper.”—*Letter in the Opinion Nationale.*

NOTE 2. Page 18.

Trapani, Corleone, sent their sons.

“Scarce had the news of his [Garibaldi's] landing spread, when the bands from Trapani, Corleone, and one or two other places joined.”—*Times.*

Notes to Garibaldi.

NOTE 3. Page 18.

Forth from Marsala comes the swelling host.

“The road from Marsala, after passing Salerni, descends one of those long, terraced plateaux, which are a characteristic feature of this part of Sicily, and, after crossing a little valley, rises up the other plateau, where Calata Fimi is situate.”—*Times*.

NOTE 4. Page 19.

The Squadri shuddering o'er their brothers slain.

Squadri (bands) of piccioli (youngsters).

NOTE 5. Page 20.

And Parterico saw these Regii fly.

The Neapolitan soldiery were called by the Sicilians “Regii”

NOTE 6. Page 21.

With the strong voice whose every tone is fate.

“The Secret Committee informed Garibaldi that Palermo was ready to rise, but it imposed the condition that he should appear before the gates of the town.”—*Times*.

NOTE 7. Page 24.

Illustrious land that midst thy champions numbers such.

“Colonel Turr, the Hungarian; Colonel Bixio, of the Chasseurs of the Alps; Colonel Carini, also of that corps. . . . The son of Daniel Manin, wounded in the thigh.”—*Special Correspondent of The Times*.

NOTE 8. Page 29.

Turkory, first to cross the barricade.

“Major Turkory, and three of the guides, were the first across the sand-bag barricade in the town, but the leader was wounded by a shot, which shattered his left knee.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE 9. Page 29.

Within the market-place unharmed he stands.

“Close to the Porta di Termini is the Vecchia Fiera, the old market-place. This was the first place where Garibaldi stopped. One must know these Sicilians to have an idea of the frenzy, screaming, shouting, crying, and hugging; all would kiss his hand, and embrace his knees. Every moment brought new masses, which debouched in troops from one of the streets, anxious to have their turn.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE 10. Page 34.

Ere noon Palermo is well-nigh their own.

“The entrance was effected about half-past 5 A.M. (27th of May), and by noon more than one-half of the town was clear of the troops. But two hours before this was effected the citadel had opened its fire on the town. About noon or so the ships in the harbour opened their fire, and between the two they contrived to destroy a great number of houses in the lower part of the town, killing and wounding a large number of people of all ages and both sexes. Two of the large shells were sent right into the hospital, and exploded in one of the wards. Everywhere you perceived ruins and conflagrations, dead and wounded, not a few of whom must have perished among the ruins of their houses.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE 11. Page 36.

There, where a fountain babbles to the sky.

“The General himself is reposing on the platform which surrounds the large fountain in the Piazza del Pretorio, where the Committee is sitting *en permanence*.”—*The Times’ Correspondent*.

NOTE 12. Page 42.

“The Washington of Italy.”

“The Washington of Italy is consolidating his conquest.”—*The Times, Leading Article*.

NOTE 13. Page 44.

The prisoners meet their friends.

“Seven political prisoners, who were detained in the Castellamare as hostages, until the last of the Neapolitan troops had departed from Palermo. The released prisoners, all young men from twenty to thirty, went up, together with their families, to thank their Liberator. He embraced them all round, and was himself so overcome with emotion that he could scarcely utter a word, and soon after withdrew.”—*The Times’ Correspondent*.

NOTE 14. Page 53.

Rebellious Barcellona’s shattered wall.

“Bosco had boasted that he would drive Medici’s troops into the sea, and destroy Barcellona, the head-quarters of the revolution in the province of Messina.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE 15. Page 54.

Melazzo's work remained for him alone to do.

“Garibaldi, apprised by telegraph of the state of things, took one of those sudden resolutions, dictated by inspiration, which shows bolder than anything else his genius as a military commander. He saw that there was a chance of striking a great blow, and a few hours were sufficient to conceive, mature, and carry out his plans. Entrusting General Sirtori, the chief of his staff, with full powers as pro-Dictator, he united whatever he could collect in men, put them on board the City of Aberdeen, a British steamer, which had been freighted, embarked with his staff, and, with a reinforcement of about 1200 men, was the next morning, the 19th of July, at Patti, where he disembarked, and marched on to Meri.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE 16. Page 57.

While Malenchini skirted by the ocean strand.

“The left, under the command of Colonel Malenchini, consisting of two battalions of Tuscans and a battalion of Palermitans, was to advance on the road close to the sea-shore, and go right at the town of Melazzo. The centre, under the orders of Medici, and composed of his 1st Regiment of four battalions—all old troops, some from Lombardy—was to advance by the direct road from Miri; one battalion of the 2d Regiment was to take the main road to Messina, starting from Corioli, and was to be joined by the battalion from St. Lucia. The centre and right were to unite by the cross-road nearest to Melazzo, and then work up their way united towards Melazzo. A body of Sicilians, under Colonel Fabrizi, was to take position on the extreme right at Arclis, so as to oppose any attempt made from Gesso to assist the force at Melazzo. A second line and reserve, the troops arrived with Garibaldi, were placed together with the troops that had come up with Cosenz.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE 17. Page 61.

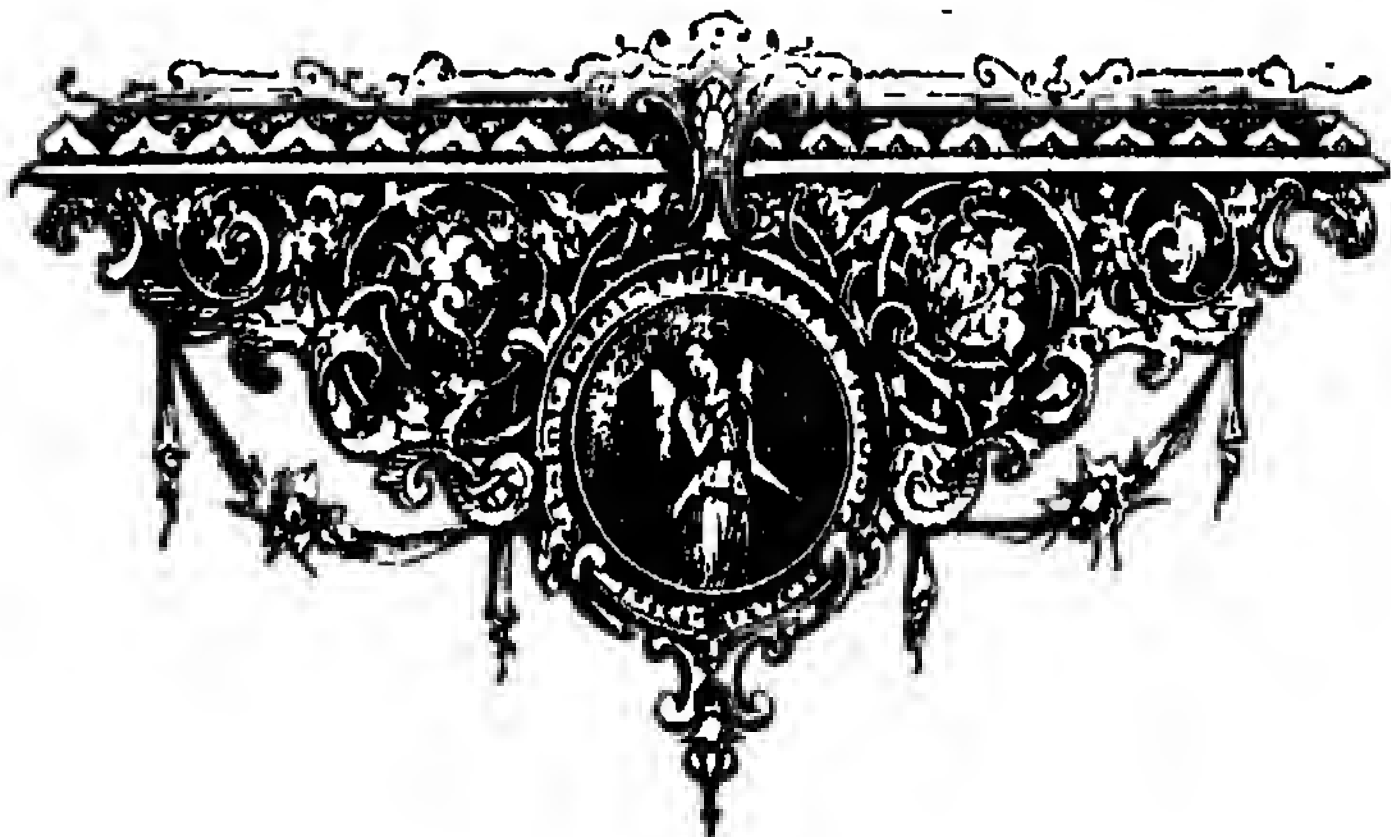
At dawn the columns started.

“Melazzo. At dawn the columns started, and by 6 A.M. the first firing was heard upon the left.”

NOTE 18. Page 67.

“Oh, thou Redeemer, for our children’s sakes!”

“I can find no words to describe the ovations that are given to Garibaldi. Imagine a long-expected Messiah greeted by the people he has delivered,—the heart of the whole people poured out before the man of the people, who feels and lives with the life of the masses! They seem at his aspect to feel instinctively a being who thoroughly comprehends them, and who loves them, even with all their weakness and all their faults, and who has sacrificed his life to their redemption. . . . People, reassured about the future, are returning; the streets, which I left two months ago dead and silent, are thronged and noisy. It is all life where I left death.”—*The Times’ Correspondent.*





OLIVIA.

IN all the room, in all the crowd,
She was the centre and the star ;
They flocked around her from afar,
The rich, the noble, and the proud.
They hung around her chair,—they bent
Low o'er the light and flowing hair,
That waved upon the heated air,
And made an atmosphere of scent.

She was all falsehood,—not a glance
Whose aim she could not calculate ;
To every smile she lent a weight,
Whose power she measured in advance :
And if you were a younger son,
But seldom were you shone upon.

But I was rich, had rank, had power,—
All that she played for in the game
Of life ; and she without a dower,
Without high birth or honoured name—
She, with the world to lose or win,
Fair heaven without, black hell within,—
She met me in my early youth,
And laid all at my feet—but truth.

I half doubt if she ever heard
Of earnest thought, or truthful word ;
She may, perhaps, have somewhere read,
'How it sometime by one was said,

I

In darker ages people spoke
Truths that upon the nations broke
Like a strange kind of thunder,— new
To terror almost, being true.

The atmosphere in which she dwelt
Made up of shams unto the core,
You might have searched for evermore
For one true heart. Although there knelt
In many a church, at many a shrine,
A seeming crowd of the devout,
Believing not enough to doubt,
Ready to call the God, Divine,
Who is the world's, and thine, and mine ;
The fashion of the day, and worn
As lightly as we wear our drefs,—
Nay, with far less of earnestness.
In this sham world, a listless scorn
Curled on each lip, drooped in each eye ;
Enough for them the hours went by,
Morn rose on night, night followed morn ;

And on the scene o'er which they past
Dropped Death's green curtain at the last.

It was from these I chose to take my fate :

I chose ? — Pshaw ! Was I not from the first glance
A puppet in the hands I knew too late ?

Was it my pleasure when she made me dance ?
Had I from her (I will not call my wife,
Although for many years she bore that name,
Until she dragged it down to such ill-fame,
I learned of later days to say, “ My shame ! ”) —
Had I from her, Olivia, in my life,

One word that made me happy, or one smile
I drank, not drinking poison all the while ?
By all my soul, not one ! For if she smiled,
I knew the falsehood even when beguiled.
I knew her falsehood ? — Nay, I did not *know* ;
I *felt* that she was false — God warns us so !

Her waving hair upon the southern breeze
Floated a golden veil that reached her knees ;

Her eyes, a clear and scintillating blue,
Had every lovely look, and not one true ;
Her Grecian features delicately fine,
Her slender figure like the mountain pine,
Swaying before the storm with fragile grace ;
And all the Naples' sunlight in her face.

It was in Italy I saw her first,—
Moment for evermore to hold accurst !
With every glory of the flanting ray
That tinged the sleeping shadows on the bay ;
With every southern air, and leaf, and flower,
That made the passing picture of the hour,—
Where every hour is as a painter's dream,
With Claude Lorraine surpassed in every beam.

I, with my tutor, in the Italian street
Stood, off the track of the swift-passing feet
Of citizen and peasant. Went and came
A gust of bells upon the crimson flame

!

That shined the death-bed of the waning day :
They went—these Neapolitans, to pray ;
Their Ave Marias through the open doors
We heard, and shadowy on the marble floors
Could see the kneeling figure and bent head,
Praying the intercession of the dead !
The town and bay all blushed one rosy red,
When she on horseback by her father's side,
Returning from some lengthened evening ride,
Came up the street. The glory in her eyes
Shone back that other sun in the low skies :
She shook more sunshine from her wavy hair
And seemed to be all light. Yes, she was fair ;
But hers a beauty that escapes all words.
We cannot paint the singing of the birds,
Though we may paint the branch on which they sing,"
And every light and shadow on their wing.
So I might set her eyes down in a book,
But have no power to translate one look
With which her soul shone out of them. I think
I knew I stood that night upon the brink

Of fate and life. She filled the street, she grew
 Out of the sky, it seemed, and filled that too.
 The world was only her, when once she came
 Through purple shadows into crimson flame;
 She was the picture, all the earth the frame,
 Worthless without the picture—words are lame
 And impotent to tell the tender sadness,
 Which made the first phase of my life's great madness.

I learned her pedigree. Well, it was not
 A noble lineage from which she sprang.
 One ancestor was——but I quite forgot
 His fate, while bending o'er her as she sang.
 Another died in——Pshaw! had these but been
 The only blots upon her name! The scene
 On which she'd played the drama of her life,
 Had been in every stage of worldly strife.
 Her father, one of those the harsh world names
 “Adventurers!” and tolerates, and blames,
 As something which in cheating may amuse,
 And is, with other villanies, of use.

His falon held each night a motley crowd,
Where play was high, and oaths were sometimes loud.
This was his daughter's court, and she a queen,
Eager for homage e'en in such a scene.

Easy to gain an entrance to the shrine
Of her all Naples surnamed "the Divine."
Her father knew the wealth of my estate,
For such a prey, his daughter fairest bait.
Thus was I welcomed with her sweetest word,
In my dazed brain strange harmonies I heard
In every accent of her voice, yet knew
Even from the first, no tone, no word, was true.

They were French—German—Spanish, as some said.

It was his will in Naples to give out
They came of a high Norman race. Long dead
' Had been his wife. They wandering about,
Now here, now there, had dragged through the long years,
In every land in the two hemispheres.

His daughter always with him, ever fair,
Star of her father's heaven everywhere.

In such an atmosphere this flower had grown,
Small wonder that her heart had changed to stone,
That she had come to be her father's tool,
And count each creature not a knave—a fool!
How could she other be than what she was,
A dark effect of a most hideous cause?
What should she know of honour, but to hold
That jewel, as all jewels, to be sold
To the best bidder: and I knew all this,
Yet set her love against my hopes of bliss,
And sitting down to play the game of life,
Staked all my soul to win her for my wife.

I was just twenty, learned in a heap

Of classic authors no one ever read;
In mathematics I had plunged, and deep

Had waded through the logic of the dead.

What was I then to her who knew mankind,

Whose place in life's great scene had been—behind? • •

On whom all worldliness had left its taint,
Who held each virtue as a kind of paint
To hide the native vices of the earth,
And valued all the world by her own worth.

Through the wide-open windows the still night
And all the stars strove with the garish light
Of modern antique candelabra, set
On inlaid tables—ivory, marble, jet,
Parian, and malachite—o'er which was spread
The green cloth of the gambler's altar—red,
Now black, now red again, each changing hue,
Changing the faces of the players too.

Amongst these men her father sat, while she,
In the arched casement, talked apart with me.

The melted moonbeams trembled in her eyes,
Their light put out the sunshine in her hair;
Framed by the background of those purple skies,
She leant against a pillar, gleaming fair

As alabaster statue, in the light
And glory of the soft Italian night.
Her dress was velvet of the emerald's hue,
Dark in the shade, with brightness breaking through
As in the facets of the precious stone ;
O'er one white shoulder carelessly was thrown
A shawl of lace, black as the long thick lashes
Through which shone forth her blue eyes' lightning
flashes ;

Her beauty had a style which fought from dress
All it could lend of pomp and gorgeousness :
Diamonds, not violets, most adorned her face,—
Nay, flowers near her seemed always out of place.
White robes did not become her—gems and gold
Set off her loveliness—at best so cold,
At best so much a light, and not a fire,
And always leaving in the mind desire
For something—if not fairer, at least, higher.

She held a sprig of myrtle in her hand,
And leaf by leaf its loveliness she rent ;

She had a restlessness — scarce discontent,
Hard to describe, as hard to understand :
An eagerness to conquer, to attain,
Quicksilver more than blood ran in each vein
Of this strange creature ; and she should have been
Some Circe of the seas, some false Lurline,
She would have reigned a queen, her throne of thrones
'Midst shipwrecked gold and foolish seamen's bones.
Oh ! how she would have sung them to their sleep,
And lured the world down to the deadly deep ;
Then laughed clear laughter through her ocean caves,
To see the nations rot below the waves.
I think I felt this even on that night,
Though her blue eyes drowned sense and soul in light :
Her voice, straight as the ball, shot through my heart,
Each word she planted there becoming part
Of the dull heart it pierced ; each accent sent
A thrill, like music through an instrument,
I trembling to what harmony might please
The master-hand that wandered o'er the keys,
And woke from the old strings new melodies.

She was three years my senior, and to me
A goddess more than woman. Still I see
The smile in the blue eyes, that seemed to say,
“He is my glove, I wear him any way,
Stretch him to any shape. A pliant glove,
Easy to bend, to lead, to please, to move,
Fooled by that password of the foolish, Love!”

She was three years my senior—three! three years!
By those too brilliant eyes undimmed by tears,
By that dull heart outworn for hopes or fears,
By that dark lifetime in two hemispheres,
By every lie her lips had learnt to speak,
By every tutored blush upon her cheek,
Whose roses ever went and came at will,
By the small hand, which, flutteringly unstill,
Could simulate the tremulous distress
Of love that dares not to itself confess
That it is love—By every cruel thought
That kept her brightest smiles back to be bought,

And would her life, and soul, and mind have set
Against the winning of a coronet ;
By these, and by a thousand falsehoods, she
Was as my elder by a century !

What was I but her puppet, then ? She held
The strings. Each mad, impassioned thought that welled
Up from my heart (and which my words were poor
To render in one sentence—I adore,
Adore you, my Olivia) she could read,
Count every drop my tortured heart might bleed
While she played out her comedy ; and mark
Each change from grave to gay, from light to dark,
In her snared bird. “Lord Reginald,” she said,
“You’ve all the world to answer when you wed ;
I am no mate for you. Seek ancient blood,
And beauty that can date back to the flood,
Tracing its pedigree through all the ages ;
I have no story in Burke’s sacred pages.
My father is a Frenchman ; they do say
That we were great in Normandy one day,
Before the Revolution swept away

High heads, and spilt the best blood in the land,
 Or drove its children to a foreign strand,
 To seek what they had never fought before—
 Their daily bread within the stranger's door.
 But I'm no wife for you. Your noble breast,
 With all its wealth of love and truth confessed,
 Is not for me ! Nay, better so—far best
 That we should part." She turned away her face
 To hide the tear she did *not* shed. The lace,
 Through which her shoulders glistened ivory white,
 Trembled upon the warm air of the night.
 "My soul ! Olivia ! not the wife for me ;
 Show me that other, whoso'er she be,
 As worthy for a monarch. Angels came
 From heaven once, and pledged their souls of flame
 'Gainst mortal maidens' hearts. So runs the tale,
 I once believed ; but now belief doth fail
 In the old legend : for could angels be
 Seduced to earth, they would descend to thee."
 Her silver laugh rang clear upon the air,
 Like music struck from glass. Upon my hair,

She laid her little hand, and idly twined
Her fingers in the tangles that the wind
Had made of my brown curls. “My foolish boy,
You will forget me!” “Yes, with all the joy
And pain called living; when my latest breath
Flutters beneath the stifling hand of Death!
Ah, dearest, lying in my last, low bed,
Your image melting out of heart and head,
I then shall know that I, indeed, am dead!”

She plumbed my soul down to its lowest deep,
The while her sweet words rocked my mind to sleep
Sounding this sea of love that spread so fast,
To find out if its stormy strength would last.
She had been woo’d a hundred times before,
Had heard all voices speak that word, “Adore!”
Some of these old admirers had been poor,
Some had been wary, and had read her through;
Some like myself—poor fools!—had been all true,
But had been sickened by her want of truth,
And gone to seek less beauty, fresher youth;

Some had shrunk back before her father's shame,
Though not one shadow rested on her fame,
And left her still to bear the branded name ;
But none had been so rich a prize as I,
Or so far gone in love's fatuity.

I was an only son—an earldom's heir,
Heir to estates as wide as they were fair ;
(Olivia's father, trickster, gamester, cheat,
Laughed in his heart to see me at her feet.
'The Southern planters out in Mexico
Had never loved so well, or knelt so low
As I—the heir to an untarnished shield,
Whose ancestors had seen the Frenchman yield,
That awful Sabbath-eve on Cressy's field—
When autumn skies were black with arrowy rain,
And only earth was blacker with the slain.
I, whose forefathers with the sea-kings came—
Old in the land, when new the Norman's fame—
Knelt blindfold to her guilty father's shame,—

Blindfold to that—to all—to gain her heart.
Heart! that high temple of consummate art,
Where all dishonours held their shameful seat;
That living lie—that base, incarnate cheat—
That set a price upon its every beat.
Why should I rail at her? Was it not I
Who swore to win this woman or to die?
Was it not I who cried, though hell should rise
Through earth, and upward reel to meet the skies,
Till Satan sat among the stars, I'd still
Hold to this purpose with unbending will,
To win her or to die? I made the words
The burden of my life, until the birds
Seemed, as they interwove them in their song,
And skylarks took them up to heaven ere long,
Trilling their music through the wide blue sky,
Till all creation's varied harmony
Melted in this,—“I'll win her or I'll die!”

•
My father died—and I in Italy!

Was this the first curse that came down on me,

In answer to my impious prayer, to win
This woman of all women? Well, my sin
Bore noble fruits! My father died, and I
Became Lord Avonly of Avonly.
I told her of his death. Up to her eyes
There flashed the sudden lightning! All her lies
Could not repress that one glance of delight,
And then her face grew mournful. All that night
Mourning with me with pensive tendernefs,
In tearful harmony with my distress.
O God, and my dead father, pardon me!
Of the long Past I could forgetful be,
And crowding all my life into one kiss,
Drown heart, brain, memory, in tempestuous blifs.
It was the eve before our wedding-day—
The long saloon was empty—for the play
Had ceased at my request. I gave him what
He would have won from others; I could not
Live, knowing that the father of my bride
Cheated at cards! I paid him, and he lied,
Saying, he'd play no more.

We were alone,
I sitting at her feet. The birds had flown
Home to their nests. Upon the purple deep
The wandering zephyrs lulled the waves to sleep :
Far in the west, one vessel, only one
Sailed towards the centre of the sinking sun ;
Close by the shore there passed one lonely boat,
One nightingale trilled out her pensive note ;
One star, the pioneer of all the night,
Slow mounted, pale in the declining light,
Fairer than all her sisters, though less bright,
And mournful in her loveliness. The might
And majesty of earth, in this still hour,
Fades from the mind, and we forget her power,
Remembering her beauty. It may be
Less fair than day, less grand than night ; to me
It holds the mingled beauties of the two ;
All colours melting in one neutral hue,
All lights and shadows meeting in one mist,
In this, the sun and moon's brief hour of tryst.

So I sat at her feet. O'er other eyes

There comes a shadowy softness in this hour ;
Not tears, but dewy mists, as those that rise
To sparkle on the leaf and bend the flower.

Most bosoms hold a melody in tune
With every tide of time from night to noon,
And with each changing shadow changing too,
Take their own colouring from nature's hue.
The sweetest laughter seems a discord made,
When the clear note rings through the mournful shade.
At that first sinking of the sun, to me
The day lies dead upon the earth, and we
By the unburied corpse watch silently,
Till the last ray drops down behind the wave,
And slanting moonbeams tremble on his grave.

Not so to her, she melted to no phase
Of nature's loveliness. To her the days,
(Stanzas in God's vast world-poem's pages,)
Were only as the halting, lingering stages
That bore her slowly to the golden goal,
The winning post, for which she trained her soul.

How should we two be happy, then? There lay
A wider gulf 'twixt us than night and day,
Which have one hour of meeting. We had none—
Not one point where our souls met; no, not one:
But as two circles, floating side by side,
Might spread and widen over all the tide,
Until they touched and broke in one embrace,
So died my soul, when in that last disgrace,
It met her naked nature face to face.

And I had won her. Was I happy? no!

We, with the animals, have instincts which
We are too proud to heed. A sense of woe—

And yet not woe—more terror. Some strange hitch
In my soul's mechanism jarred my breast,
Where every joy seemed cradled—except rest;
In the full chord of life one note was wrong,
What note I could not tell. But in the song—
The psalm of joy—some wanting word was not;
What word I knew not. On my heaven one blot

So small I could not track it ; yet so vast,
 Its shadow over all that heaven was cast.
 I say, God's warning whisper in my ear
 Darkened each bliss, suggested every fear,
 But could not hold me from the gulf—so dear
 I held this woman. He who in this clay
 Infused that glimmering Promethean ray
 I call my soul, placed it beneath her sway,
 All helpless, save to worship and obey.
 The strongest tides will bow to Dian's rule,
 So I to her—the blind god's blindest fool.

'This thought—no, instinct—deep within my mind,
 This, and the influence of the dying light,
 Had kept me silent ; now a cool fresh wind
 Swept o'er the sea, calm breathings of the night ;
 The moon lit up her face, so wan before,
 And all the stars came round her to adore.
 Still 'twas no time for words, the best are cold
 Beside *that* eloquence. The heavens hold

A silent music of their own, and weak
All human voices, when they deign to speak.
With stars for words, God writes upon the sky
The shining poem of Infinity.

I turned from heaven to her. Oh ! wide and far
Lay that great gulf betwixt her and the star
From which I took my gaze, and in her eyes
Sought for the light I'd left upon the skies.
She looked out on the sea, far, far away,
Her gleaming eyes shot past the purple bay,
Out to the distant trail of rippling beams,
That seemed to part reality from dreams,
And light the threshold of the land of sleep,
So peacefully profound that distant deep.
She had no fancies like to these, she schemed
And calculated, where another dreamed.

So I broke not the silence, neither she.
She sat, her face half turned away from me ;
Beneath the windows stretched a leafy screen
Of lemon-trees, and olives darkly green,

That, bordered by a low and broken wall,
 Some straggling myrtles and a waterfall,
 Made the wild garden ; where in fair decay,
 Languished the ghosts of a dead yesterday.
 From out the shade of the luxuriant trees
 There sudden swept upon the evening breeze
 A serenade's first notes. Rich, deep, and grave,
 Floated the finger's voice o'er grove and wave,
 Till, mingling with the night, it seemed to be
 Part of creation's own great melody ;
 So well did every accent harmonise
 With that unuttered music in the skies.
 The words ran thus—I'd need remember well,
 The first faint murmur of my soul's death-knell :

“ ‘There's a witch beneath the sounding sea,
 More fatal than the wave,
 And with every smile she smiles to thee
 She lures thee to thy grave.

She is false as the ocean where she dwells,
 More false is she than her coral cells,

But she crowns her hair with glistening shells,
Her waving hair with wet sea shells ;
And the stars die out beneath her eyes,
And the low winds listen when she sighs ;
And all on earth that's fair and bright
Derives from her a lovelier light ;
But oh, beware, beware her spells,
For he who loves her, dies !

Yes, he who loves thee dies, Lurline '
 Lost, lost in loving thee ;
And I am lost for thee, Lurline,
 As thou art lost for me,
Lurline ! Lurline ! Lurline !”

The voice grew nearer—he who sang thus, played
On a guitar, wild wandering notes, that made
The plash and fall of waters ; mingling well
With the bass voice whose cadence rose and fell,
Now loud, now low —Lurline ! Lurline ! Lurline
A chord that sounded like a sob between
Each repetition of that name —Lurline !

So sad the notes, it almost seemed to be
 As though one wept in music. Presently
 The finger came through the low boughs that drooped
 On the wet grass. He pushed them back and stooped
 Under rain-dropping branches, while their dew
 Fell glittering on his hair—of inkiest hue,
 So black, his pale face by the contrast shone
 White as a mask in monumental stone.
 A flight of steps led from the balcony
 On which we sat, down to the grass where he
 Stood, striking idle chords on his guitar
 Some paces from the steps, yet not so far
 But I could every line and feature trace
 That made the foreign beauty of his face.
 He spoke. “Good evening, Signorina!” “Oh!
 It is you, Signor Carlo Angelo;
 I recognised the voice.” She knew him then,
 Olivia; ’midst the varying crowd of men
 Who thronged her father’s house, I had not met
 This man. His face was not one to forget;
 More Eastern than Italian—those dark eyes,
 That took their beauty not from hue, or size,

Or shape, though all were perfect, but from light
That broke through all, as Mars breaks through the
night ;

Perpetuating in each glance of flame
The love, the hate, the pride, the fallen fame
Of a great people, now become a name.
It pleased me not—Olivia's knowing him,
This man whom I knew not—and darkly dim
That cloud, no larger than a human hand,
Stretched its great shadow over all the land,
Prophetic of the future. He stood now
On the first step. Up from his broad white brow
The lifted hair waved trembling round his face,
He leaning one arm with a careless grace
Upon the balustrade ; she looking down,
The sea before, behind, the sleeping town,
The garden at our feet, and silent all,
But the low whisper of the waterfall.

“ You have returned to Naples, then,” she said ;
“ I thought you were in Rome. I've surely read
That you've been singing there.” “ You're very kind
To bear me merely thus much in your mind ;

I scarcely thought you would remember me,
Even by sight. 'Tis three long months,—yes, three,
Since last we met, Signora ; and, you know,
Few ladies can recall so long ago.”

She laughed her lightest laugh. “ But, then, you see,
(Small credit have we from your gallantry,)
The Opera-house is closed when you're away,
And the dull night succeeds the listless day ;
Cecilia hides her fainted face, and we
Hold you, by selfishness, in memory.”

“ Good, good, Signora ; why, that's almost true !”

“ Believe me, yes, all Naples mourns for you.”

“ And you with Naples ?” “ I with Naples ! No,
I've no self-interest, Signor Angelo,

In saying I am glad of your return, •

For I leave Italy ——” “ I've not to learn

The news, Signora. That I heard to-night ;

It was my welcome home. My deep delight,

Hacknied congratulations cannot speak, •

All words are idle, and all phrases weak ;

But when you number those who joy to see

Your joy to-morrow, Lady Avonly,
Spare but one passing thought to rest on me."

An opera-finger—Carlo Angelo!
I'd often heard of him ere this, I know;
Strange, looking back, to marvel how a name,
Now' linked, perhaps, to grief, death, madness, shame,
Was once a sound that smote upon the ear
And made no echo! Love, nor hate, nor fear,
Stirred the dull pulses of the heart. We heard
That burning name, an unfamiliar word
Without a meaning; or, it may be, we
Drew in our minds a pictured phantasy
To fit the sound. Always to find that what
Soe'er we painted, that the man was not.
She introduced me to him. Coldly grave
And dignified the frigid bow he gave—
Cold as an Englishman's. "Pray, do you know
Our fog-bound England, Signor Angelo?"
"Yes, I sang there a year or two ago:

A noble land, my lord, the proud and free
 Antithesis of trampled Italy.
 I go again next March.” “What song was that
 You sang just now?” From off his dripping hat
 He shook the raindrops; smiling, paused, then said,
 “That song? Oh! one made to be sung, not read:
 It has no name.” “It is a mournful air,
 A very burst of musical despair—
 Beautiful, as you sing it.” Here he bowed.
 “I am too careless ever to be proud,
 But if I could be proud, perhaps ’twould be
 This very moment, my Lord Avonly.
 Mere idle notes I strung into a song,
 The words and music both to me belong—
 Nay, not to me, but to the moment—born
 Of that one night-hour, vanished ere the morn.
 Our thoughts and dreams are fairies, which we raise
 Not as we will, but as it please the fays
 Themselves to rise. A conqueror might gain
 The world, but never conquer his own brain;
 Thoughts, true republicans, are free as winds,
 And laws may fetter nations, but not minds.”

“ The song was improvised, then ? ” “ Wert not wise
To say, that all who live must improvise ;
We *think* more poetry in one still night
Than would take poets half a year to write.”

“ You do not write ? ” “ Write ! no, let write who may,
To shine to-morrow, so I live to-day.

I never look beyond the hour, and hold
Him worst of fools who prays when he lies cold
As the dead stone that’s laid above his grave.

New men may say, ‘ This man was great or brave,’
While pleasure-seekers come each summer’s morn

To see the house in which he was not born ;

And parrot-guides point out respectfully

The very room in which he did not die,

And gravely mispronounce his honoured name ;

While opposition critics praise or blame,

Not giving praise or blame where both are due,

But each to suit the *tone* of his review,

Exalting him, not for his own renown,

But by the dead to keep the living down.

Oh, Heaven help your *earnest* man, to me

The veriest fool of all mortality !

His days are labours and his nights unrest,
 Scorned by the bad, misconstrued by the best,
 Neglected by the million. Glad to place
 His hope of payment in a wiser race,
 Deeming himself the best thing in the land,
 Too great for lesser souls to understand,
 Down Time's black gulf he trustful leaps, to be
 The Marcus Curtius of posterity,
 And heal the ills of all the future world
 To unborn swine, poor wasted jewel, hurled.
 Better he'd lived his little life, and been
 The careless Touchstone of the passing scene."
 "You're a philosopher!" "We'd need to be
 Philosophers to live in Italy.
 Despoiled of all, we've still the glowing skies,
 And to be happy, need but shut our eyes.
 I was not born to set sick Time aright.
 I weary you, I fear, my lord. Good night!
 Good night, Signora! This for comfort take,
 My lord, Italian hearts are hard to break:
 Italian souls, though quick to flame and burn,
 Have something womanish, and turn, and turn,

And turn again. Indeed, Italian hate
 Is the sole steady fire : that — that is fate ! —
 As Fate holds to its course whate'er betide,
 Will wade through blood, but will not turn aside.
 It breathes no curse. Why waste itself in breath ?
 It has no voice but one, and that is Death !
 Keen-eyed, and watchful of its victim's woe,
 It tracks his footfall for the fatal blow.
 We in the world alone know *how to hate* :
 Our secret lies in this, my lord — we wait !
 Signora, fare you well, since I must be
 Below the sphere of Lady Avonly.
 But when you shine, proud star, in prouder skies,
 Dream still we mark you with admiring eyes ;
 There, where you reign, in heavens whose height sublime
 We see, yet know not, watch, but may not climb.
 Good night, good night !” Upon the air again
 Rose the last stanza of his careless strain —

“ Yes, he who loves thee dies, Lurline !

Loft, loft in loving thee ;

And I am loft for thee, Lurline,

As thou art lost for me,

Lurline ! Lurline ! Lurline !”

A year ! We were in London. She and I —

I and my wife. Oh, bitter memory !

Where the *Nepenthe* that will wash away

The black remembrance of that byegone day ?

Time only adds acuteness to the pain,

And deeper darkness to shame's unworn stain.

I hate myself — not her. She was — my Fate,

Too mean for vengeance, far too low for hate.

We do not hate the reptile, though it flings,

We do not rend the wrinkled vulture's wings,

But, loathing, leave him to his hideous prey ; —

Hate would have honoured her too much, I say.

Where loftiest trees are stricken, weeds, exempt,

Are left to flourish, sheltered by contempt.

I was not happy ! No — fair words, sweet looks,

And pretty phrases, learned, perhaps, from books ;

All these are charming — exquisite, when youth

And beauty lend them grace, but are not — truth.

•
Oh, spurious gold ! How hard I tried to dream
Thou wert, indeed, the thing that thou would'st seem ;
How gladly let her bind my willing eyes,
And lull my charmed ear with tuneful lies ;
Taking the outside colour for the true,
I would not look beneath that surface hue ;
With burnished coin of empty compliment
She paid my sterling truth ; and I, content,
Took—all she had to give—not quite deceived ;
At most, I but believed that I believed.

A year ! the London season at its height,
And she surrounded by a motley throng ;
In crowds she passes every day and night,
And queens it over all. It was not long
Before she took her stand, and wore her crown
So newly won, as hers by right of birth,
The sovereign of the world—at least, the town.
To her, I think, Mayfair was all the earth,
The heavens a canopy to roof Mayfair,
And scarcely atmosphere past Belgrave Square.

What, then, was I? Her satellite—her groom,
When she received, to walk about the room
And talk to those too dull for her regard,
Or to fill up an invitation card;
Read her new books before she read them, and
Form a rough view, that she could understand,
Retail and paraphrase at second hand;
At her grand levees stand behind the throne;
Hand her to dinner when we dined alone;
And be, in short, what she would have me be,
Her favourite footman out of livery,—
For ever ready, answering to her beck,
To hold her lap-dog or to sign a cheque.

One night in every week she set apart
For music. The best masters of the art,
With crowds of the distinguished amateurs,
Flocked every Friday to her open doors.
Gluck, Beethoven, Mozart! oh, how each name
Can bring back the old dead unburied shame;
Slave to association, how I hate
Each detail in the background of my fate,—

A book, a flower, a paper on a wall,
A patch of garden glimmering through a hall,
A picture — nay, a sentence, will recall
That period, with its torture stamped on all.
I hate the streets, the squares, the atmosphere,
One month of all months in the hateful year ;
And never feel so truly desolate
As when the lingering days drag round that date.
One Friday night — the windows to the ground
Were opened. Those assembled crowded round
The grand piano, at which some one sang,
Whom, I know not. The high soprano rang
Up to the lofty roof, clear, silver, sweet,
And showered refreshing music on the heat,
Until its very clearness sounded cool
As falling water. Heaven knows the school
To which the air belonged — their jargon was
An unknown tongue to me. They lectured, as
Music had been geometry, and made
With rule and compass — like the builder's trade —
Done by arithmetic, and strict control
Of facts and figures, not by heart and soul,

As when a man says, "Let all ages drink
 This melody and feel the thought I think,
 Which I think thus—I cannot give them more ;
 My soul, heart, self, are set down in the score."
 And thus we've some "Hope told a flattering tale,"
 Some "Moonlight," or some earnest funeral wail,
 Like the "Dead March in Saul," which seems to weep
 For every foldier carried to his sleep,
 Such tears as foldiers may. Olivia stood
 Near the piano. Her most brilliant mood
 I think she wore that night. Her sparkling face,
 Her dashing raillery, her perfect grace,
 Made her the centre of admiring eyes ;
 While eager listeners waited her replies,
 And caught them with a laugh before they fell,
 As silver tongue that strikes a silver bell.
 She stood behind the finger, I before ;
 She, facing the wide open drawing-room door,
 I facing her. Behind her spread one sheet
 Of looking-glass, in which from head to feet
 All entering were reflected. When the song
 Was done, there was a flutter in the throng,

A gentle rustling of filken dress
And compliments, whose graceful carelessness
Was insolently charming. Then they drew
Round Lady Avonly. “You’ll sing. Ah! you
Will sing that song I’ve dreamed about since when
You sang it last—Oh, let us hear again
The mournful music!” “Nay, Lord Lionel,
The enthusiast’s tone, indeed, becomes you well,”
She answered, laughing: “’Tis an idle thing,
That song of mine—but, at your wish, I’ll sing.”
They crowded round the instrument. Still I
Stood facing it. Heaven knows, I know not, why
My attention wandered from my wife, the crowd,
The symphony, the song; though I was proud
To have her so admired, and seldom took
My eyes from her on duller things to look.
That night, I say, I wandered, and a gloom
Strangely at variance with the brilliant room,
And still more brilliant crowd, came over me.
Wrapped in that strange and sudden reverie,
I leaned my head upon my hand, and let
My fancy wander back to when I met

Olivia first ; and with that moment came
The foreign street, the clouds of crimson flame
Low in the evening skies ; her golden hair .
Streaming like sunshine on the southern air.
As this came back she sang. I let her song
Mix with the tide that carried me along,
Until her words — that scene — the sinking sun —
Music and memory melted into one.

“ Oh stars, that shine on distant waves !
Oh stars, that light unhonoured graves !
Alone ye saw departed years,
And ye alone shall watch my tears.

“ Oh ! tender, silver rays, that fell
Upon the head I loved so well ;
Ye know the past, eternal beams,
And ye alone can read my dreams.

“ So guard my secret till the last,
Stars of the present and the past,
Unchanged where all are changed, remain
Sole silent records of my pain.

“ Then still look down on distant waves,
For ever light unhonoured graves !
For few the years, before ye shine,
Lamps of the quiet night, on mine ! ”

“ Lamps of the quiet night, on mine ! ” She raised
Her eyes with the last note, and sudden gazed
With one brief glance of terrified surprise ;
Only one lightning flash in the blue eyes,
And the sun back again, ere you could say
The lightning had eclipsed the fairer ray.
I looked up at the ending of the song,
And saw that glance that shot across the throng
Out towards the door—then looking to the glais
In that beheld who the new comer was.

Italy—Naples—all the summer scene,
And that low, mournful strain—“ Lurline ! Lurline
Flashed back, as, framed before me, tall and proud,
O’ertopping with dark head the English crowd,
Stood the Italian—Carlo Angelo.
Was it at sight of him she started so ?

No, surely ; for how carelessly she said,—

“ I think I see, my lord, above your head,

An old Italian friend. You don’t forget .

The singer whom one night, you know, you met

At Naples, and whose singing charmed you so?

What, you in London, Signor Angelo? . . .

You sing this season, then, I fancy?” “ No.

No, Lady Avonby, I do not sing ;

I’d other motives strong enough to bring

Me suddenly to England——” “ And they are —— .?”

“ Not worth alluding to. I would go far

To hear you sing that old song to the star.”

When first he entered, why—why did she start?

Consummate mistress of consummate art !

I did not know her then, and it might be,

I thought, some old, old chord in memory

Was struck upon by sight of Angelo ;

And, if I doubted, let the shadow go.

I was too proud to doubt. Poor fool ! I thought

My love had won the thing my gold had bought.

I saw no more of Angelo—he went
Back, as she told me, to the Continent.
I felt a strange relief in knowing this.
We seldom spoke of him. The precipice
On which I stood, with flowers and sunshine crowned,
Fair to the eye as an enchanted ground,
Gave no hint of the gulf beneath. The light,
Born of the vile miasmas of the night,
I took for sunshine. Once, indeed, I said—
(Dressed for a ball, with flowers about her head,
She stood before a glass, the dusky room
Lit only by two tapers, through the gloom
She glittering like a gem)—“This Angelo,
When did you know him first?” “When did I know—
When did I know him first? So long ago,
I scarce can tell how long. He used to come
So often to my father’s; ’twas his home
Almost in Naples. Ah, poor Carlo! he
Is, as the world says, his own enemy;
Gambles and lounges through the idle day,
Flinging his chance of name and fame away.

I am so sorry for him !” Oh ! if Heaven
 Had struck her dead as she said that, and given
 Her soul back to the hell from whence it came—
 How scornfully *insouciant* ! “ Name and fame
 He throws away, poor Angelo !” A smile
 On her false, rosy lips, and all the while
 One idle finger twirling round her wrist
 A coil of glittering gold, that with each twist
 Jingled and made a music. “ Let us go,
 We waste our time, to talk of Angelo,”
 She said ; “ there are some men who never rise,
 For whom earth holds no better, higher prize
 Than idle hours and cloudless summer skies ;
 And he is one. But you, Lord Avonby,
 Spring from another race than such as he ;
 For yours is ancient blood, whose sanguine fount
 May fail in death, but while it flows must mount.”

(Poor fool ! whom tinsel such as this could blind,
 Never to guess the baseness hid behind).

My lovely statue ! well, and thou wert fair,
 Heaven in thy deep blue eyes and golden hair !

What had I loved thee for? Thy loveliness!
That never changed, or faded, or was less
Than when it shone on the Italian street.
Yes, that was true, though all the rest a cheat.
And was not that enough? What though thy feet
Were basest clay, my statue—it were meet
I learned through thee mere beauty's worth, my sweet.
I learned that lovely lips can utter lies,
And cruel glances look from sunny eyes;
I learnt the sterling worth of golden curls,
Teeth glittering, twin rows of peerless pearls;
A Grecian nose and chin, a snowy brow,
Smooth, alabaster, classical, and low.
Strange! These things do not form a perfect whole,
And seem to want a something—wanting soul!

I had been out of town. 'Twas in July,
Hot mists obscured the bright meridian sky,
The streets were thin, the pavements hot and dry;
No breath of air, not one cool, pitying breeze,
Stirred the scorched leaves upon the dusty trees,

When I rode homewards in a cabriolet,
 Through the metropolis that summer's day.
 The business that had summoned me away—
 Some trivial matter touching an estate
 (Left by an uncle's will to me of late)
 My agent could not do—had been achieved
 With less delay than I could have believed
 It could be done. So I returned before
 I was expected ; driving to the door,
 I passed the porter : ere I was aware,
 I stood upon the landing of the stair ;
 An icy horror lifted up my hair,
 My heart turned cold and stopped, and then I knew
 I never really thought this woman true.
 That quick revulsion told me all—I had
 Been blinded—but not blind—I had been mad,
 Not duped—false to my soul and sense, as she,
 Although so true to hell, was false to me.

I leaned against the pale, medallioned wall—
 The stairs, the glimpse of garden through the hall,

With orange-trees that never blew, and flowers
That withered slowly through the hot noon hours,
The drawing-room doors before me, and the light
Down-shining, softened by the lofty height
Through a glass dome above my head. All these,
As pictures painted upon raging seas
Might seem to a man sea-sick, seemed to me.
This but a moment—I had need to be
Myself—*myself*—if in my chequered life
Once only—*now*—for now I *knew* my wife.

Olivia and the man whose voice I heard—
Death, shame, and madness in each poisoned word—
Were in one drawing-room, that they called the blue.
To gain this you might pass another through,
And enter by an archway, not a door,
A velvet-curtained archway, and no more
Between the two rooms. This I stood behind
And heard —— And yet I'm not out of my mind,
Pistols are in the world, dark rivers run,
And still I live to look upon the sun.

“What if I should speak out? By Heaven, I will !
 Your pretty phrases shall not keep me still.”
 ’Twas Angelo who spoke — “Nor yet my gold?”
 “No, keep the paltry price for which you sold
 Your paltry soul. You only waste your breath
 In bribing me. Go, ask old age or death
 To keep aloof, and shun your lofty door :
 When they shall listen, I will — not before.
 You saw the Duke to-day. You want to wear
 His strawberry leaves upon your yellow hair.”
 She laughed a short triumphant laugh — her eyes
 Shone with a wicked light, like lurid skies,
 That smile, and yet mean death. “What if I speak,
 And give my heart one joy before it break —
 Die of a surfeit of hate’s deadly lust,
 (You, lovely lady, crawling in the dust)
 What if I speak?” “You will not, Angelo ;
 Your hate says yes, but still your love says no ;
 For you do love me, Carlo Amico !”
 I saw her, and I did not kill her, rest
 Her golden head upon the young man’s breast,

And look up with such tender, trusting eyes
As little children lift up to the skies
When told Who reigns above the stars. She took
His strong right hand in hers, and on it shook
A rain of tears. She cried, I've said, at will.
"Will you betray me, Carlo? You can kill,
But to the last, my soul, you'll love me still."
He looked down at her, and I pitied him,
I—I, his deadliest foe; his eyes were dim
With mists that swam their blazing fires above,
And drowned revenge and hate in depths of love.
"I love you still! Alas! alas! my fate,
Unless I loved you still, I could not hate.
Those fires together die, together burn,
And hate is only love without return.
Have I not loved you? thrown my life away?
Wasted a year to be with you a day?
Spent sleepless nights in pondering your words,
Outwatched the stars and risen ere the birds,
To pace long hours beneath your window-fill,
And know you and creation slumbered still?

Am I not beggared for your father's sake ?
 With open eyes I cast all on a stake ;
 Glad to be cheated when he held the dice,
 And deaf to friendly warning and advice.
 And now, the Duke, the Duke ! Upon your head
 You'd wear *that* coronet when *he* is dead
 Whom for *his* coronet you pleased to wed."

" Pshaw, Carlo ! if the Duke has dared to say ——"

" Dared !" He laughed bitterly. " I mind the day
 When meaner men have thought they honoured you,
 Stooping the gamester's lovely child to woo.
 Well ! if the Duke has dared to lift his eyes
 Up to my lady, that is, to the skies —
 What then, Olivia ?" " Only, nothing then ;
 Why more to me the Duke than other men ?
 I never loved but you." " Your husband ?" " He ?"
 One smile of concentrated mockery
 Lit up her face. " Carlo, I think you do
 Love me a little, though you hate me too ;
 And yet your love is not the love men know
 Who *win* the thing they cherish, Angelo."

She looked him in the face. His back was turned
To me. On her pale cheek there hotly burned
One crimson spot,—a hectic fever flush,
A fire, a flame, a blaze, but not a blush.
Her hand—*hers*—trembled, as she laid
Her fingers upon his. “When *he* is dead
I shall be free—but until then——” he caught
His hand from hers. “Oh, if I read your thought,
You are—worse than—yourself! Olivia, no,
I am not that you take me for, although
I should be capable of all, ’tis true,
In being capable of loving you.”
She sneering said, “I summoned you to-day
To end a farce, and not to act a play;
So keep your powers for *La Sonnambula*,
And your reproaches for your Amina;
Your handsome face becomes this haughty rage,
And your loud anger only lacks—the stage.
Say that you love me not, so be it, go!
But if you love me, Carlo Angelo,
Prove that your love *is* love. Ay, Carlo, prove
The widest meaning of that wide word—love.”

“ Speak out,” he said, “ I’ll take no hints from looks
And wicked flashes from your cruel eyes ;
You’ve read of Southern villains in your books,
And peopled Italy with villanies.

You think I hide a dagger in my breast,
And murder skulks beneath my silken vest ;
You have read wrong—we do not kill—we fight,
And hold our only foes the foes of right.
I will not slay your fair-haired boy, nor be
One blot the more on fallen Italy.”

“ Who talked of slaying him ? you choose your phrase
From old Minerva novels and stage-plays ;
If you would have me speak out, and be told
What would have told itself to one less cold,
And have been—*done*—ere this. You and the Earl
Might quarrel, might you not ? Say he should hurl
Your opera-fingering in your face, and you
Call it an insult—bitterer, being true ;
And then—and then—that place they call Chalk Farm,
Where trodden grass revives beneath the warm
Life-blood of better men. You know the rest.
A bullet piercing to the left the breast—

A nine days' wonder — then old Italy,
Fortune, and all the world for you and me !
Ah, if you love me as you say, I know
We might be happy, Carlo Angelo."
She laid her head upon his shoulder, and
Twined in his waving hair one tiny hand,
Standing on tip-toe till she caught the curls
Through which her fingers glistened white as pearls.
“Lurline ! Lurline !” Ah, fishermen, beware
The cruel fyren with the golden hair !
They made a pretty picture, with the light
Flickering about their heads. Her brow was bright,
Her cheek was flushed, her rosy lips apart,
Her white dress fluttering with her beating heart ;
With upturned look towards his darkening face
She stood beside him in unstudied grace,
All purity without, all guilt within —
A lovely image of incarnate sin.
But suddenly he flung her hand away.

“Thank God, I know you now ! thank God,” he said,
“My eyes are opened, late though come the day,
I know you, and know why you'd have him dead !

It flashes on me with a sudden light
 'That serves to show the darkness of the night ;
 You'd have him dead, you'd see him fall, and you
 So false to him, to me would still be true,—
 'To me, whom you betrayed a year gone by :
 And left to curse your falsehood — or to die !
 I see it all, and looking through your look,
 I read beneath it as I'd read a book :
 You'd have me kill him — and you'd wed the Duke !
 Love me ! You never loved ! Your wicked heart,
 Choked up with perjury, brimful of art,
 Never had room for love to hold its place—
 Love is a lie you wear upon your face :
 Go choose elsewhere your tool ; I am not he,
 To be lieutenant in your treachery.

I know you—and I've loved you. Do you know
 The oath I registered a year ago,
 When I returned from Rome and heard them say
 The morrow was to be your wedding-day ?
 I swore to drag you down into the mire,
 To strip your veil off, and to show your fire

And you were in one plot, he,—trickster, thief;
You, guilty, willing tool, and he the chief.

I swore to do this !” “ Which you did not do ;
In loving, Angelo, I trusted you :

We cannot love the thing we do not trust——”

“ That’s false !” he said, “ I love you still, and must,
Although I know you ; yes, I know, I know ;
And through the morning in your face, below
See the black night concealed within your breast,
Yet for the lovely mask give up my rest.

It is not you I love—your golden hair,
Your deep blue eyes, sweet smile, and stately air ;
Your Grecian nose a straight line from the brow,
Your mouth that steals its mould from Cupid’s bow ;
I have gone mad for these. I might as well
Die for a picture done by Raphael ;
The painted canvass would be quite as true
And full as capable of love as you.”

“ Rail on,” she said, “ your love is like the rest ;
A noisy torrent, impotent at best,
And wondrous loud from very shallowness.
I’ve dreamed of other love I do confess—

A love that deals in deeds, that will achieve,
 And pointing to its work, cry out, ‘ Believe—
 Believe by this—in this—through this behold
 Whether my arm be weak, or heart be cold !’
 I’ve dreamed of love that overthrew the world
 And all the nations into chaos hurled ;
 Then built a palace on the wreck to dwell
 With her it loved, not wisely, mind, but well.
 But there were giants in those days. I thought
 A lover was a Hercules who brought
 Nemæan lions to his mistress’ throne,
 And threw them down for her to tread upon.
 And yet, and yet ——” She, pausing suddenly
 Turned to a window with an aviary,
 In which the birds flew loose ’midst hothouse flowers,
 Singing their foreign songs in genial bowers ;
 With one white finger through the bars she played
 With a green parroquet’s gay plumèd head,
 She leaned her curls against the gilded wires,
 Her drooping lashes veiled the vivid fires
 That had illumed her eyes ; one careless hand
 Twined in and out a purple curtain band,

The diamonds on her fingers glittering bright
Until they seemed on fire with the light ;
Drawn through the wires by the summer air,
And flickering in the sun, her tangled hair
Blew in upon the bird. A lazy smile
Slept on her rosy, parted lips the while,
And just above her head one heavy rose
Drooped down to kiss her hair. In fair repose
A model for a Titian she reclined ;
In beauty leaving all the flowers behind,
That trembled round her in the summer wind.

Up to his southern face, in hues of flame,
The southern torrent of his passion came :
“ Oh, what if Death come down,” he said, “ for you ?
Why question whether you are false or true ?
Why question aught—enough to know—you are—
You are, and I adore you. Ah, my star,
My lode-star, meteor, *ignis fatuus* !
Why do I rave and rail about you thus ?
What can I do but follow where you lead,
And blindly serve you, sovereign, in your need.”

Do with me what you will—but only shine—
Your light for weal or woe alone is mine,
And I unutterably more than thine.”

She drew her white hand from the wires, and laid
The slender fingers in his palm, then said:—

“How the old time comes back with the old phrase—
Your words reanimate departed days,
While galvanized by passion, youth returns,
And from life’s ashes, Love, the Phoenix, burns—
Ah, trust me, Angelo, when I am free,
I’ll prove how well I can be worthy thee.”

“You shall be free,” he said. “Since, at the worst,
For you I scarcely can be more accursed;
My creed, career, my honour, and my name,
My country, kinsmen, fortune, peace, fair fame,—
All these, long since, for you I flung away,
And stand before you left of all to-day;
Only from blood, at least, my hands are free;
But vain the boast—they shall be stained for thee!”
His voice was hoarse, he staggered to the door—
“Farewell!” he cried. “Nay, Carlo, *au revoir*.”

She waved her white hand with the parting words,
And then resumed her trifling with the birds.
The blush-rose still dipped down to kiss her hair,
Her curls still wantoned with the summer air ;
Upon her rounded cheek another rose
Bloomed fresher than the flowers, and fair as those ;
The red lips never parted with their smile,
And yet her thought was—murder—all the while.
She built air-castles 'thwart a sea of blood,
And would have waded through the crimson flood
To reach her worldly soul's supremest good.

He met me on the stair. His cheek grew white,
(I little doubt I was a ghastly sight,)
He reeled against the gilded balustrade,
While from his eyes the fever seemed to fade—
Their light all dying out—and thus we met ;
As then I saw that man I see him yet ;
Still see the young, the pale Italian face,
With that dark something of an Eastern race
Darkening its beauty. Still I see the change
In which each lineament seemed new and strange,

So that his brother might have passed unknown
That livid mask of animated stone.

I said but this: “Signor, ’twixt you and me,
What need of words, the blood of one must be
An offering to the other’s injury.

We have no quarrel. Nay, are friends in this,
Both on that fair-haired fiend have set our bliss,
Both have been dancing puppets in her hand,
Building life’s palace on the fickle sand ;
Now amidst ruin both together stand,
And must until one falls.” He bowed his head.

“Let it be so, ’tis best, ’tis well,” he said,
“In her Delilah presence I have grown
A loathsome thing I shrink to look upon ;
And should again become the same ; her spell
Would lure me down into the depths of hell,
Or shed a wicked glamour round the place
’Till hell seemed heaven, and damnation, grace ;
You, dancing puppet !—you ! You never were
What I was to that witch with golden hair ;
She never loved you—and to you, her eyes
That caught their colour from Italian skies,

Have been the skies without the stars—they shone
Full constellations upon me alone,
Because, with all her falsehood, she was true
In loving me, but never loving you.

Such love as hers, unlit by spark divine,
Fickle and false at best, yet still was mine.

Poor boast—nay, rather burning shame to be
Worthless enough to please with such as she;
The something she could understand; the thing
She loved to look at, listening when 'twould sing,
Accepting all its youthful worshipping
Until the incense grew a want, and thus
A bond of seeming love united us.

Pshaw! let us end this farce, and if it be
Thought for its climax half a tragedy,
May the last dying speech be made by me!”

“That rests with Heaven! When the sun goes down,
At eight, you'll meet me northward of the town.”

He bowed. “At eight,” he said; “say, somewhere near
The place *she* named,—Chalk Farm; the light is clear
At eight o'clock, and then the sinking sun
Is so much handier than the rising one;

It could not well be better, we do not
 Want friends to choose the weapons ; name the spot,
 And yet ——” “ And yet,” I said, “ *she* is least worth
 Of all the creatures on this crowded earth
 A man should risk his life, or leave his name,
 To bear e’en more than its allotted shame ;
 For the survivor’s sake it were far best
 To put ourselves in other hands ——” “ *Su restè,*”
 He said, “ It saves us trouble, I shall be
 Happy, my lord, whoe’er you send to see
 And introduce him to my deputy—
 The choice of weapons rests, I think, with me,
 But I decline that choice. I fence, it’s true,
 (As most Italians, as I fancy, do)
 And thus might have advantage over you.
 I would not have it so ; no, let us fight
 In the old English fashion——Till to-night !”
 He bowed, went down the stairs and crossed the hall.
 We had not raised our voices once, through all
 This hurried dialogue, while to and fro
 Passed and repassed the servants in the hall ;

The footman lounging in the window, read
The morning paper, and ne'er raised his head
To wonder what we talked of. Nodding, slept
The porter in his chair. Unseen I crept
Down stairs, then reascending, let my boot
Give noisy warning of my coming foot,
And went into the drawing-room. Still her hair,
Drawn through gilt wires by the summer air,
Blinded and vexed her peevish tropic birds,
She, soothing them with pretty nonsense words—
The broken music made to please a child.
She heard me enter, started, turned and smiled
A gentle welcome, lifting up her eyes
And eyebrows with the prettiest surprise.
“What joy to have you home before I dreamed,
And yet not soon, so long the days have seemed—
Why do you take your hand away?” she said,
Then tried to lean her graceful drooping head
Down on my shoulder as I'd seen it lay
On Angelo's, beneath that same bright day.
“Nay, check the fervour of your welcome,” I
Replied—“I have returned, but hurriedly,

En route, into the North——” “Is something wrong?”
 “Something—scarce worth the naming. You, ere long
 Shall know the worthless something that is wrong.
 And now, one word, Olivia, you have been
 More than my wife,—my idol, goddess, queen!
 We might part suddenly. Life is at best
 A journey fraught with danger and unrest,
 And travellers who set out side by side
 Are apt to part ere they return. My bride,
 I’ve trusted you, and all my soul have given
 Up, with such faith as good men place in Heaven;
 If—if your early teaching—or your youth,
 Spent with bad men, perchance have dimmed your truth;
 If you look back and say, ‘In life’s strange scene
 There is a better part that might have been
 Mine to have played ——’ Or if your father’s shame
 Left half its taint on you, till you became
 Something you were not born, lost child, to be;
 Your guilt, less guilt than dark fatality,—
 If this, Olivia, were our dying day,
 Both yours and mine, what is it you would say?”

With a scared face she looked at me, and then
With one brief pause looked all herself again ;
“ What should I say ? ” “ Olivia, think—we might
Neither survive, this day, outlive this night
Have you no word—no word ? Though listening Fate
That one decisive whisper might await
Ere the recording angel wrote ‘ too late,’
And closed your book of sin—not one—not one ? ”
“ Not one,” she said. “ So be it ! I have done ! ”

Red in the west the sun went down,
I riding northward of the town,
The mingling city voices, blent
Into one deep-toned chorus, sent
Their distant murmur on the air ;
The suburb garden-flowers bloomed fair,
The tired citizen at rest
Sat blinking at the crimson west,
That made his wine so golden bright
His glass seemed filled with liquid light ;
The laughing children on the grass
Peeped out to see the horseman pass ;

Red sun on the suburban scene,—
Red sunshine on the village green,
The purple distance like a sea
Lay wrapt in shadow silently—
The town receding as I rode
Past scattered lamps that feebly glowed,
Lit ere the sun went down, and dim
In the great light that came from him—
The vast blue dome behind me rose
As watching o'er the town's repose,
The winding river peeped between
The roofs in gleams of golden sheen,
The faint lights twinkling here and there
Seemed diamonds hung on sapphire air.

The voices of the busy crowd,
Melted in one, now low, now loud,
Lost all their earthliness of tone,—
Nay, had a music of their own,
Till, even London seemed to be
That night a fairy town to me.

God's evening peace was on the land,
On all the impress of His hand ;
The sun gone forth to other skies,
That sinking here he there may rise,
And prove Death *is not* to the wise.
Silence and Shadow, angels twin,
Brooded o'er earth ; yet Death and Sin,
Those darker angels, still were nigh,
And did their work as silently.

What did I think of as I rode
Away from man and man's abode,
Across the hill, till at my feet
The meadow greens lay dewy sweet ? —
What did I think of ? It might be
That never more would beam on me
God's picture, Earth, to which is given
Beauty to whisper that of Heaven,—
A fanc, that by induction shows
The master-hand by which it rose ;
And by induction seems to say
How more than fair that Far-away,

Which, in its beauty wide and high,
Surpasses earth unspeakably,
As that incalculable sky
(Where myriad constellations beam,
Remote as lamps that light a dream,—
A golden sand to common eyes,
But worlds and systems to the wise,)
Passes all power of thought to mount,
Or e'en its trackless realms to count.
A thousand years leave scarce a trace
Of change upon that spangled face ;
For from the spot where Egypt's lore
First tried to tell the mighty law
(That ruled the orbs she nightly saw)
How by the tomb, across the door,
One shone—we see it as of yore :
It beamed on kings whose names are dead ;
It shone on shrines whose gods are fled,
It gladdened its beauty in the Nile,
Osiris wandering by the shore ;
And with the same eternal smile,
Still looking down upon the door,

The modern *savant* tells with pride
How much its rays have moved aside,
And how, long ages past, its light
Shone further to the left or right ;
And, tracking time and space by this,
Fights with creation's mysteries.

To me, th' Assyrian's creed were best,
And faith to me seemed something—rest !
So while I saw the heavens shine
With light that could but be divine,
I by the effect believed the cause,
Nor fought, nor prayed to learn its laws,
Content to know but this—It was !
Content to pray that there might be
Amongst those stars some home for me ;
Where, purified by faith and tears,
More fit to walk those shining spheres,
I might forget my earthly years !

He was before me, lying at the foot
Of a great oak-tree's gnarled and rugged root ;

His second, an Italian, pacing near ;
 He singing—his rich low voice rising clear
 Between the puffs of his cigar,—a snatch
 Of some anacreontic drinking catch ;
 One folded arm beneath his ruffled hair,
 The thin smoke curling in the balmy air,
 One idle hand entwined in the long grass
 On which the breezes tremble as they pass
 His drooping eyelids shutting out the skies
 Kept the dark secrets of his eastern eyes.
 Handsome, *insouciant*, in the dying day,
 Upon the brink of night and death he lay.
 How could I kill this man ? My cautious friend
 Had brought a carriage to a green lane's end,
 So the survivor might escape and fly
 Beyond the reach of law. The quiet sky
 Still gave clear light enough for each to trace
 The lineaments of his opponent's face,
 But no time could be lost. I never meant,
 God knows, to kill this man—I never sent,
 Of my own will, this careless soul away
 To that dread land beyond the night and day.

I would have spared him. 'Twas my wish to spare,
And yet I would not fire in the air ;
But so my barrel I had meant to guide
That the dread bullet speeding by his side
Should whistle past him, but yet harm him not—
So face to face upon that grassy spot,
Ten paces only distant, we were placed :
Upon his brow a shade of gloom I traced ;
Something, scarce sorrow, more of discontent,
As at a wasted life ignobly spent,
Which might have been—— Ah ! in that evening scene
Arose, perhaps, that ghost. The “might have been”—
Death o'er life's landscape brooded darkly grim,
And earth had no perspective now for him ;
Behind, a trackless waste of reckless years,
Before, the mysteries of all the spheres ;
Shut in by darkness as a wall of stone,
Some shuddering dread the bravest heart might own,
And Alexander shrink from—the unknown !

The white glove fluttered as it fell ; the prayer
Died at my heart. He fired in the air.

My hair-spring was not set. The touch that served
 To fire, now failed. A stronger pull—it swerved,
 My pistol swerved—a trifle it may be—
 But all a lifetime’s misery to me
 Lay in that swerve scarce wider than a hair—
 Oh, God ! that I had fired in the air !
 Oh, wasted agony ! oh, futile prayer !
 Up to the heavens arose my great despair,
 As he fell bleeding to the ground——

He died !

In all his reckless beauty, reckless pride.
 I told him how I held myself to be
 His murderer—told all my agony—
 What I had meant. He smiled. “ Thank God ! ” he said,
 His second raising up his feeble head,
 His wandering hand stretched blindly towards my own,
 In which it lay, cold, heavy as a stone,
 With that last deadly dampness in its grasp
 That holds life spell-bound in death’s lingering clasp ;
 Fast-gathering dew upon his pallid brow,
 For ever faded that faint crimson glow

Which through the pallor of his cheek had shone
Like shadowed roses upon marble thrown,
He lay half in my arms, half on the ground ;
I used my handkerchief to staunch his wound,
The soft white cambric scarcely stayed the flood
That steeped and dyed it in his welling blood.
The doctor we brought with us, shook his head
As two light fingers on his wrist he laid ;
There was no hope. I tried in vain to trace
One gleam of hope in that averted face ;
He, Carlo, spoke, the life-blood ebbing fast,
And every accent weaker than the last :
“ Oh, God be praised, you’ve killed me ! this will rest
On that vile golden head ! If in that breast
The bad heart holds one throb—I’ll not say, human,—
If in this dreadful creature, miscalled woman,—
In this incarnate curse, if yet there be
Anything—sensitive ! she will think of me !
Not weep for me—she keeps her tears for show.
Not grieve for me—she knows but acted woe :
But she may yet—remember ! May my face,

Ghaftly before her through all time and space,
 Her shuddering, loathing dread, in every place,
 Haunt her, till, dying after weary years,
 My words still ring upon her deafened ears ;
 Before her fading sight my features rise,
 Hate on my lips and horror in my eyes ;
 While o'er her drowning life my curses roll,
 And I dispute with Satan for her soul—
 Tell her, I cursed her, with my latest breath
 Hoarded for that anathema in —— death !”

They tried to hurry me away—they said
 That I must fly. I bade them bear the dead
 Home in the carriage they had brought for me ;
 I would ride back alone—then cross the sea ;
 Would start that night for Dover, but must do
 Some business ere I went. The darkness grew
 Out of the evening—night arose. Oh, where
 (While their stiff burden with the clustering hair
 And white still face, the quiet seconds bear),
 Where was the soul, gone forth upon the night ?
 No faith to guide its wings, no lamp to light

The dark, dark way.—Would God heard the prayer
I concentrated in that dread word—Where?
I turned my horse towards the distant dome,
And through the darkness silently rode—home!

Lights in the drawing-rooms. Lights upon the stair,
The busy servants hurrying here and there;
The notes of a piano on the night,
Through the conservatory's rose-hued light,
Stole out upon the street. A joyous song,
Trilled in the clear notes I had known so long,
Came ringing on my ear. A gay refrain
Mixed with a hoarse voice that took up the strain
In tones that marred the melody—before
Those who admitted me had closed the door,
I asked, “Who's with her ladyship?” “The Duke
Of Lindesmere, my lord.” A pitying look,
Half sorrow, half contempt, I seemed to trace
On this man's—an old servant's—quiet face.
“He dined here with my lady.” “*Tête-à-tête?*”
“Your lordship, yes.” “Tell them my horse may wait.”

I strode up-stairs, and in a moment more
 Stood by the inner drawing-room's curtained door ;
 She sat at the piano—'neath a globe
 Of ground-glass filled with chastened light—her robe,
 Rich velvet of the sapphire's changing hue,
 Light in the light, in shadow darkly blue,
 In contrast with her waving yellow hair,
 Made the fair falling locks more golden fair,
 And colour warmed the beauty something cold
 Until she shone enshrined in blue and gold ;
 Like some mediæval saint behind a glass,
 Which all the faithful bow to as they pass.
 The Duke, a roué, sixty years of age,
 Stood nodding, as she sang, above the page—
 This was the game she played then—this the prize,
 The end and aim of all her villanies !

I let the curtains fall behind me, and
 Stood opposite the group ; her rapid hand
 Running a brilliant scale, so sudden stopped,
 So suddenly the Duke the music dropped,

So suddenly I broke upon the two
With tumbled hair, and brow of ashen hue,
(I saw my face reflected in a glass,
And in my madness wondered whose it was),
So sudden all the scene, it well might seem
Some painter's fancy of a dreadful dream,
In gaudy colouring and lurid light
A pictured vision of unreal affright.
Olivia was the first to speak. "You play
A sort of comedy, my lord, to-day,
I scarcely thought——" "You scarcely thought," I said,
"I should return; you're wrong, 'tis he is dead:
Give me your hand, I've something for you—this!
A handkerchief. You ask not what it is;
'Tis that you prayed for, if I understood
Your words to-day; 'tis blood, my lady, blood!"
Your will is done, 'you've worked your wicked spell;
And yet your plot has failed!—The wrong man fell!"
The blood-stained handkerchief was in her hand,—
"Whose blood?" she shrieked; "Oh, let me understand:

There's some one mad here!—Angelo!” she said,
 Clasp^{ing} two frantic hands about her head,—
 “Oh, let me understand—he is not dead!—
 He dead! And you——alive!” “Olivia, yes.
 Who would not sympathise with your distress?
 Not for his death your anguish, but my life!—
 His Grace there cannot have you for a wife,
 You think perhaps,—you're wrong,—the law unties
 Such knots as ours. My lord, behold your prize!
 If you can take this mass of guilt and lies,—
 If charms that smell of charnel-houses please,
 And you find light in eyes as false as these,—
 If you can lull your dying head to rest,
 And sigh your soul out upon such a breast,—
 If that bright head and wealth of golden hair,
 With every crime upon it, still seem fair,—
 Take her!—worst hatred scarce could wish you worse:
 In having her, your Grace has every curse!”
 Beating wild hands on her dishevelled head,
 And crying out, “’Tis false! he is not dead!—
 Carlo—adored—Amico! Dead!—no, no:
 Come and disprove them, Carlo Angelo!”

In a mad rage she flung the Duke aside,
And rushed towards the door. “My life!” she cried,
“I never loved but you! I lied—I lied!
Only my lips were false; my heart was true,
And never trembled in its faith to you.
Carlo, come back—come back, and let me be
A beggar by your side; but come to me!”
Foam at her lips, and madness in her gaze,
Her light hair, glittering with her diamonds’ rays,
Shaken in tangled showers upon her dress,
In very waste of wanton loveliness,
Her shoulders gleaming through the shining blue,
Like snow-clad mountains through night’s purple hue,
She rushed to where I stood across the door,
Tottered, and fell down death-like on the floor;
The Duke, affrighted, leaning wildly o’er
This fallen friend!

I never saw her more,
Except in dreams or fever,—ne’er again,
With waking eyes and unbewildered brain,

Beheld the fatal loveliness that made

The terror and the madness of my life ;
And only knew by that one darkening shade
That blighted all my days—I had a wife !

There was a trial. I was free, they said,—
Free, with that young man's blood upon my head,—
Free from the chains that bound me to her—free !

She and the Duke in Paris, where, they say,
He is the slave before her footstool, she
The toast, the wit, the beauty of the day,—
The unfanned snow itself for purity !—
I, prince of Machiavellian villany ;
She victim of a vile conspiracy !

“ So runs the world away,” the poet says,
And “ some must weep ;” and by the Naples shore,
Where I drag out the remnant of my days,
There is a grave, wild myrtles trailing o'er,
'Tangled with arbutus flowers ; the grass
White with spring's snow, the wood anemone :
The sun and moonbeams kiss it as they pass ;

The distant murmurs of the founding sea
Whisper the secrets of Infinity ;
While all creation's myriad voices blend
To speak God's comfort, " Death is not the end !"
Here, resting from the world's great puppet-show,
His short hour flitted, Carlo Angelo
Lies in that slumber, of whose quiet ease
Only the angels keep the awful keys.

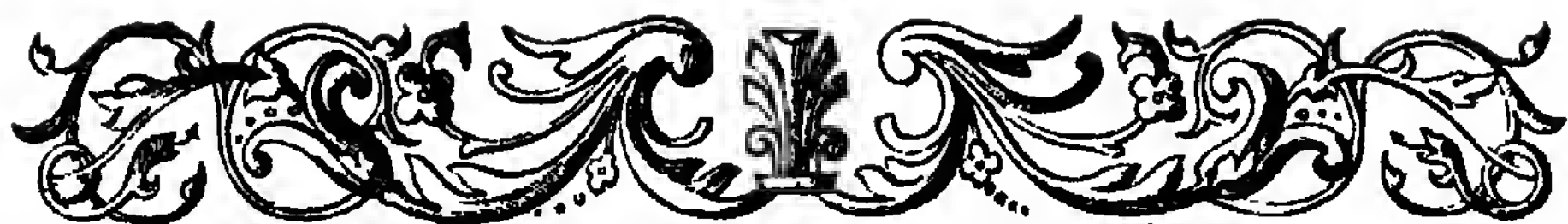
Thus runs the world away ! I sometimes hear
Some wandering echoes from my lady's sphere,—
' The list of guests at the last ball she gave,
I read, low lying by her lover's grave —
" His Grace's diplomatic dinner, where
His Majesty ——" The wandering southern air
Fluttered the leaves, while high above my head
The woodlark sang,—they did not wake the dead ;
Her heartless triumph touched him not : the bird
Might sing its loudest, but he never stirred !
I made a picture of her in my mind,
And painted this upon the summer wind.

A wicked woman,—weary of her life,
 Herself, her soul, her wickedness ; at strife
 With God and Heaven, for Hell watched to claim
 And hold her by her self-forged bonds of shame ;
 A wretch, whose every hour and every day
 Was falsely brilliant as a long stage-play,—
 Who dragged her steps beneath a golden chain,
 And made contortions smiles to hide her pain,—
 Who hated all the world, and desolate
 Turned on herself the remnant of her hate.
 I saw her, after some great day, let fall
 The lovely mask she'd worn at *fête* and ball ;
 I watched her frightened start and shudder, as
 She looked on her first wrinkle in the glass ;
 Linked to a man she openly despised,
 Self-fold for glories she no longer prized ;
 Care by her pillow brooding through the night,
 And memory waking earlier than the light ;
 Old age, her terror, ever creeping near,
 And stealing some new beauty every year ;
 Abandoned to a restless discontent,
 Too wicked to have courage to repent ;

With frequent opiates soothing her false breast,
And cheating Time, her torture, with false rest ;
Counting the hours by length of agony,
Still forced to live, because afraid to die ;
Dreading to glance behind, but dreading more
One fearful look to the black gulf before ;
With neither faith in God nor hope in Heaven,
Tearless, impenitent, unblest, unshriven,—
Her only prayer to outraged mercy this,
That God, beholding all her miseries,
Would, in His scorn for one too low to hate,
Be pitiful, and but—annihilate !

I thought not of his Grace,—for what was he,
That I should number him my enemy ?
Why should one vengeful pulse my bosom stir ?
What need have I of vengeance ?—He has her !





·UNDER THE SYCAMORES.

GOD guard that spot beneath the sycamores
Where blood was shed once by a woman's hand !
Man shuns the dark shade of those sycamores :
There night is blackest—there the winter's wind
Shrieks shrillest—or in loud prophetic voice,
With fitful wailings through the storm'ning days,
Seems as it knew the story of the place
And tried to tell it in harsh syllables,
To scare all sentient things from sheltering there.
The smiling summer there can only frown,

For the thick trees shut out the sunny skies,
And the damp ground will not be shone upon,
Will only nourish rank and poisonous weeds,
And will proclaim with black and hideous looks
Here once was murder done.

The records tell

How a chief's daughter, one Menamenee,
Was left an orphan in her early years,
And was proclaimed the Princess of her tribe,
Male issue failing to her father's line.

Thus the tribe said, "She shall select a mate,
Dauntless and handsome as her glorious self;
Shall choose from all our people him that is
Swiftest of foot, boldest of heart and mien,
Wiseest and greatest. They shall have a son
Whom they shall rear to be our children's chief,
And to recall the virtues of her sire—
The brave Dark Eagle." Young Menamenee
Is straight and slender, graceful, light and free,
As shadows thrown by flowers on sunny grass

That flicker as they fall ; her deep black eyes
Have the Dark Eagle's radiance in their glance,
And can command as his were wont to do.
Her hand can wing the arrow to its home
In the bird's heart that flies above the trees ;
She has all his imperious grace ; a queen
In every gesture, word, and thought, and deed —
What a strange sight to see such pride brought low,
Such regal beauty prostrate in the dust,
And such a warm and noble heart abased
For man with reckless foot to trample on.

She met a stranger in the forest path,
Who turned aside to note her Indian grace ;
She met a stranger—and his deep blue eyes,
Through the dark night, were with her in her dreams,
And shone on her, till changing into stars,
She woke, and gazing upward to the sky
Still saw their light in depths of azure blue.
Again she met him in the forest glade,
And this time in distress ; thrown from his horse,

In danger ; so they bore him to her home,
And laid him on a couch of soft dried herbs,
Brown moss, and withered flowers. There he lay
For weeks, she watching by him through the long
Still days and nights, of fever and unrest,—
Delirious wanderings of the burning brain,
Through black despair to glimmering hope, until
A change came o'er him, and he grew to know
His tender nurse. To listen to her voice
That soothed him to his rest with Indian airs
Sung in a plaintive minor. Well he knew
The touch of the light hand that smoothed his hair,
Or laid cool simples on his burning brow,
And had a power to soothe, apart from them,
By very virtue of its tenderness.
All suffering past, he lay as in a rest ;
So deep, it might be death—and all so sweet
And heavenly peaceful, it *could not* be life.
And she—alas ! She sang a mournful song,
That she had mused out in her heart of hearts,
Night after night, when watching in his face
The strife of death to quench the light of life.

“ I met my fate down in the forest glade ;
I met my life in the deep forest shade,
And each wild impulse of my heart obeyed
The master of its fate.

It may be death I met in the deep shade,
It may be that he wins the Indian maid,
But never can this soul in grove or glade
Select another mate.

“ I met my soul down in the wild wood deep,
His eyes are stars that light me in my sleep ;
His image graven on my heart I keep,
To cherish till I die.

It may be vainly that I watch and weep ;
This light of life I may not burning keep,
But oh ! if he must sleep the last long sleep,
No other rest will I ! ”

•

This pale-faced stranger came from other lands,
The blue sea brought him to the Indian home ;
The treasure that he sought was only this :

A temple for the worship of his God,
Where persecution could not come between
Heaven and his prayers—for in his native land
His Sabbath had been kept 'mid strong, stern men,
Armed to the teeth, in Highland fastnesses,
Ready to change the Bible for the sword,
And (words of Jesus fresh upon their lips),
Drown the blue heather in the foeman's blood.
He had seen the hearth-tree in the Scottish home
Dyed with the blood of those who made it dear ;
The father powerless to save the child,
The child to shield the father ; all the while
The war-cry ringing through the stricken land
Was fashioned from the Evangel's peaceful words,
Tortured by bigots to a foreign sense,
And made a call for bloodshed. So he came,
Leaving his young wife to his father's care,
(Till he should build the nest for his sweet bird),
Came to erect a home, and in the wilds
Of the dark forest to hew out a spot
Where he might rear an altar to his God ;

Where he, in the long peaceful future years,
Might watch his children grow to stalwart men,
And die the founder of a settlement.

One evening, in a warm and crimson haze,
That changed the forest deeps to lakes of light,
She, with grave eyes uplifted to his face,
Sat at his feet, while his low, serious voice,
Told the sweet story of the Christian faith,
Unto this simple Indian Princess, new
As tale of fairy-land to listening child.

She pondered o'er each sentence, and once said,
" Say that again, for then I did not hear
Your words, but lost them listening to your voice.
Methinks this story I have somewhere dreamed,
Or dreamed that such a story might have been,
To finish the completeness of the earth
With a more fair beyond. That sharp blue line,
Brink of the grave to which the sun goes down,
You call the horizon, breaks too suddenly

The glory and the beauty of the world ;
So, oft I dreamed there was a path beyond,
Could we but learn the way. The pale sad shade,
Whose touch strikes youth and valour into dust,
Is then an enemy whom we may mock,
Knowing our triumph cometh in the skies.
But tell me, Paleface, in that quiet land
Of the Hereafter—shall we ever be
Together—side by side as we are now ?”
“O, y, happy souls meet in the fields of heaven,
And tender greetings on the sapphire airs
Of the Eternal City, rise and fall
In low harmonious cadences of joy.
There shall we meet, thou, maiden, and my wife ;
Whom thou wilt meet on earth, so Heaven allow
To me the bliss to live to see her here.”

“ Your words are strange unto Menamence :
Your wife !——I think that means another love
Another sharer in your great, brave heart :
So be it ; it is wide enough for all :

A forest-tree, beneath whose shade may rest
Others besides your poor Menamence.
Why should I weep because the stars I love
Shine down into the souls of other maids,
And are by them beloved? Yon pale cold moon,
So pale she seems the shadow of herself,
Sleeps on the breast of other lakes than that—
Yet see how peacefully the waters flow
Pillowing her inconstant beauty to calm rest,
Not rending it in a wild, jealous storm.
So sleeps your image deeply in my heart,
Entire, unbroken: and so may it lie,
As deeply in the tranquil heart of her,
Whom you so tenderly do call your wife.”
“Hold, Princess!” With one gesture of his hand,
He stopped the torrent of her simple words,
Then lapsed in silence deep as the still hour,
And quiet as the red and purple west;
He hid his face upon his folded arms
And prayed; how earnestly, God looking down
On the weak soul by love of Him made strong,

Dearer than earth, till growing blasphemous,
I dared to set thy smile above the stars,
And see their light more lovely in thine eyes,—
If I were weak as this—which I am not—
There still could be no word 'twixt you and me,
That would not mask a poison in its music,
Save 'this' death in two syllables—Farewell!”

She caught the death-blow in that word, “Farewell!”
And laid upon his arm a cold, firm hand,
Not to be shaken off. “I cannot tell
How, in thy journey to that trackless sky,
I should be hindrance to thy upward path;
Let me go by thy side,—be thou to me
The teacher and the champion of the truth;
And when thou stand'st by God's eternal throne,
Thine offering shall be, not one soul, but two,—
Mine, dark until illumed by light of thine;
As by the sun the world; and saved through thee.
And for my love, that shall not hinder thee,
Since I none other know for thee but this,—

The love that hath no thought except to watch
Through the long day the changes of thy face—
Through the still night the shadows on thy sleep,
'Till I can read thy dreams on lip and brow,
Weaving a history for every smile ;
When thou art absent, listening to thy step
Making soft music through the crackling leaves ;
When thou art silent, waiting for thy voice
Until I half imagined that you spoke,—
Imagining so much what you would speak—
Or calling back the tones of yesterday
To muse and brood upon. Such love as this
Would be my glory through the long, flow years,
Until I laid me down upon thy grave,
(For I could die of nothing but thy death,
'Taking such life from every look of thine)
And died of joy, not sorrow ; since by thee
I've learned the faith which is the death of death !—
Such love as this can scarcely hinder thee,—
Shall never let thee from the golden goal !
So, on my knees, I pray thee to remain ;

Build thy fair home in the wide forest here,
Where'er thou wilt; for thou, that art my world,
Canst make a world for me where'er thou art.
Bring thy young wife : I will for her and thee
Be handmaiden and sister." " No, Wild Rose,
Sister thou canst not be to such as I ;
Nor canst thou e'er be more. All love of mine
Is due to one ; and she shall have her due ! —
Love, sanctified by grave and holy men
Through the long ages of the Christian faith,
And registered by vows ordained by God ;
The which departing from, to sin and death
He leaves the souls rebellious to His word."
" And, Pale-face, in your soul, your thought, your heart,
There is no place for any love but this ?"
" For none but this. Philosophers have lied,
False to the life-blood of their beating hearts,
And found their madness to be madness, but
When it has driven them mad,—have wrecked their souls
On some chimera of the Grecian sage,
Going down blindfold to the depths of sin.

Look up, sweet wild flower, to that deep blue heaven,
Purple enamel, gemmed with golden lamps,
God's jewelled breastplate ! Poor, that mighty type—
Albeit it seems so infinite to us—
Of His infinity, and of the home
He keeps for thee beyond those starry worlds !—
Bright sentinels of that far land, as far
Beyond their light, as they beyond our ken.
Angels, Menamenee, await thee there,
Keeping thy best smiles, which are all too bright
For common wear on earth, to give to thee,
The jewels of thy bridal day, in heaven.
And think, dear child, when Earth's poor hopes are dark,
This is the dream, and that will be the waking ;
This the black night, that the unbroken morning ;
This life the death,—that death we dread, the gate
That opens on true life ! Oh, false, false world,
Mocking us with wild tears for griefs unreal,—
Tortures that are but shadows,—heart-breaks, pains,
Passions, and madnelles, that should not be
By us, whose faith rests in a future bliss,

Further regarded than a fitful dream !”

“ It is your voice !—’tis sweet to hear you talk !

When you speak thus to me, my heart is rent

By two emotions,—happiness and pain ;

Your accents bring delight, and always must

To me, albeit your words convey despair.

Oh, tell me, Pale-face,—pale, cold, dead of heart,

You say that if you loved (as you do not—

‘ As I do not love !’—well I marked the words,

That itined hope or ever it was born !)

That future home your God has promised me

● I should not enter,—that eternal life,

‘The gift of heavenly love, were lost to me,—

Lost, having won thy love !” “ What then, Wild Rose ?”

“ I would resign that gift. I will not say

I would exchange it, Pale-face, for thy love ;

For there is nothing that my soul can dream,

Or that my mind can fathom, I could set

Against the value of thy love to me ;

But I would throw that heavenly hope away

To win this earthly bliss,—as would a child,

Who, wondering, sees the stars he cannot reach,
 Barter them for the wild flower at his feet :
 For what to him the glory of the stars,
 So that he loves the frail wood-blossom most ?
 'The prize we seek for from the hand of God
 Is not *the best*, but that which best we love."
 "Menamence, thou know'st not what thou say'st !"
 "I cannot say what I have in my heart,
 Or, if I could, I think 'twould touch thine own ;
 But well I know what I do say, and know
 How powerless it is to tell my thought.
 Oh, what a broken mirror of the soul
 Is the best language that the tongue can frame !
 If, as thou say'st, beyond this hope of heaven,
 There is a wild fear of a punishment
 For love, which thou call'st sin ——" "Menamence !"
 "Thou canst not check me !—Then I'd brave that fear,
 Defy that punishment,—as little heed
 Its coming, while thou held'st me in thine heart,
 As I would fear the gloom of night, while day
 Shone glorious on the world !" "Menamence !"

“ I’ll say no more ! If thou canst love me now,
Take me,—thy slave, the weed beneath thy feet
To trample out of life, if so thou wilt ! ”

Still silently he stands ; with thoughtful eyes,
That look on the wild maiden’s wild despair,
With tearless, hopeless grief as great as hers,
But calm as some old Roman’s agony.
He must not take her in his sheltering arms,
~~He must not~~ He must not fight the battle by her side,
O’er Life’s wide sea she must go forth alone ;
He, powerless to shield her from one wave,
Or warn her from one rock, upon the shore
Must leave her,—so abandoned, wild, and lost,
He cannot doubt her shipwreck in the storm.

All this was in his heart, and yet he turned,
And left her with the black night coming down,
Her only comforter ; chill, rising winds,
The tenderest friends she had to dry her tears ;
And nothing nearer her than—God ! and He

Seemed so far off to this poor helpless child,
Who seeing him on earth, she loved above
All heaven and earth, so deaf to her despair,
Thought God Himself would fail to hear her cry,
And pitying send His pitying angel—Death.
He read her thought. A light was in his heart,
By which he saw the darkness within hers ;
And yet he left her. But he read that night—
The Indians peeped in at his doorless hut,
And, wondering, saw him poring on the pages—
He read, how Abraham gave his only son,
While God smiled on the sacrifice of faith,
Sparing its consummation. And he read
Of One in all things tempted like to us ;
Who, above all things, purely passed through all,
To prove man could be spotless to the last,
And going through fire, would never scorch his robes,
So, through the flame, he went straight on to God.

She leaned against a tree, with slender hands
Clasping the trunk. “ Would I were rooted here !

Would they would chain me in this lonely spot,
Or lay me, living, under the dull earth.
So, though I did not rest, I could not stir,
And thus I could not follow him. Oh, where,
Where is the pride of the Dark Eagle's race,
That I should make my love into a prayer,
And cry that out aloud which should be still,
Dying unspoken in a woman's breast?
I cannot change my heart. Oh, Thou, who rul'st
~~Love~~, throb, know'st that it cannot change
Until Thy pity stills its pain in death.
I well may doubt his God is merciful;
When he, the merciless, can leave me here
To fight this strife of my dark soul alone.
But I will cure me of this wild disease;
Will pluck this rooted serpent from my heart,
Will not be conquered, will not hear the voice
Of the dark waters in the long still night
That cry to me, 'Come to our pitying breast,'—
Will not obey, upon the mountain-tops,
The winds that shriek—'Leap o'er yon precipice,

And thou shalt find a quiet rest below.'

The gun, whose use *he* taught me, shall not tempt
My hand to turn the muzzle to my brow,
And from my brain blot love and life at once ;
I will not dash my head against the rocks,
As I have dashed my heart out in this love
For one, far colder than the coldest rocks ;
I will not die, but will be conqueror
In this great battle of the breaking heart."

So many days she wandered through the deep
And wildest pathways of the black pine-woods,
Where night for ever dwells ; and where the sun,
Whose light was pain and weariness to her,
Came not to mock her with those golden rays
She would not know, as messengers from heaven.
Her long loose hair, in damp and tangled locks,
Veiled her wan face, and vexed her bloodshot eyes
Which were more mournful for their tearlessness,
And the redoubled lustre of their gaze ;
Fever and madness mingling in their light,
Until their brightness made them well-nigh blind.

Her drefs hung loose, and torn by branching shrubs,
Through which she roamed unconscious where she trod ;
Each Indian trinket, tarnished, scattered, rent ;
Wampum, and beads, and trophies, once revered
By the Dark Eagle's race, unheeded hung
In wild confusion 'midst her falling hair.
So well she shunned the wigwams of her race,
That the tribe sought her long, and vainly sought,
Till one, her favourite in the good time gone,—
~~One who~~ had held her in his arms a child,
Met her by nightfall near a dismal pool
On which the shade of many sycamores
Fell, deepening the waters' unknown depth
With shadows darkening the shadowy stream :
He met her here, implored her to return,
Knelt, prayed,—nay, wept ; recalled her father's love,
Urged in her father's name her coming back
To her old place of honour in the tribe.
She looked at him with strangely earnest gaze,
And said, “ I try to know you, but can not
Remember where I saw you. Yet, I know

Your face was once a solace to my eyes ;
Your voice was once familiar to my ears ;
Your hand that now clasps mine with grasp so strong
It hurts my wrist, had once a friendly touch :
It must have been before I died ——” “ Wild Rose,
You are not dead. Sweet flower, you are not dead !
The leaves are scattered in their summer pride,
Their fragrance lavished on a wanton wind
That cannot know the glory they have lost.
The stem remains—the flower will blow again,
For kindlier breezes to inhale its breath,
And warmer sunlight to revive its bloom.”
“ You say I am not dead—this, you call *me*,
A weary body, suffering and cold,
Foot-sore and weak, may be, indeed, alive,
If it be life, to suffer endless pain.
But this ——” She lays her hand upon her breast,
“ But this is dead—this life within my life—
This life, the Pale-face bade me call my heart,
Is dead and cold. I weary with the weight
Of the dull corpse I carry to and fro.

I do not know you — though athwart a mist
I see a face that once was known to me ;
A muffled voice strikes on my wondering ear,
But of its import nothing do I know
Save that it would do that which no one can
Henceforth achieve for me — 'twould make me weep —
The birds have sung to me sweet, mournful notes
To melt the ice that freezes o'er my tears ;
The river, with a distant murmuring voice,
Would have beguiled another's grief ; the flowers
Have held their fair heads up beneath my feet
For me to crush, and given in their death
Fragrance to chide me, till I should regret them,
And thus be won to weeping. All in vain,
No voice of earth or sky can touch my heart
Save one — I shall hear that before I die !”
He saw that she was mad. She would not go
Back to her home with him. With a strange laugh,
She said, “ My home is in the forest now,
Wider and statelier than my old abode,
More fitting for a Princess such as I ;

Here will I wander till I meet the friend
I seek through all my wanderings.”

“ And he —— ? ” “ Is known for his unerring hand,
And is a leech esteemed through all the world :
Ne’er known to fail to cure. He will but lay
One finger on the pain I carry here,
And pain and patient will alike be still.
I wait the echo of his lingering foot ;
When I have met him, you shall take me back
To my old home ; and in your songs to-night
You shall give thanks for lost Menamenec,
Whom the Great Spirit hath restored to peace—
Till then, farewell : thou’lt find me ’neath these trees ;
It is our tryfing-place. At set of moon,
When the stars fade, and death is in the heavens,
His shadow on the earth shall fall on me ;
On the tenth day from this, come here to seek
Your withered Rose ; till then, again, farewell ! ”
She flung his grasp from off her slender wrist,
And sprang into the thickest labyrinth.
Long time the Indian sought her through the pines ;

He fought in vain, and sad and slow returned
To tell the tribe the story of her woes,
Which had obscured her brain and driven her mad.

So, still she wandered on until the morn
Arose upon the seventh day from that
On which she met the Indian. She set forth
Bending her way toward the well-known spot,
Where Roderick Graham had hewn out the wood
And built the framework of his rough abode ;
She came with tottering footsteps through the shade,
And came upon him unawares, and stood
Long, silently, ere she made known her coming.
She saw him, leaning, with his axe in hand,
Against a monster tree he had hewn down,
Lost in grave thought ; his dark-blue eyes were closed,
As if he would shut out a world he loathed, —
As if he would shut out the weary sun ;
And, turning his eyes inward on his heart,
Die of the tortures locked within its depth.

The Indian girl sprang towards him with one bound,—
One thrick of triumph from her fevered lips,—
One flash of mad delight in her wild eyes :
“ You lied ! you lied !—you suffer, and for me !
You are—you are, indeed, my other soul !
The madness that hath driven me mad, is not
Unshared by you ; the deadly, poison cup,
So deeply drained by me, you, too, have drunk ;
The fell disease that scorches through my brain,
Burning my sense out, sears your brain as well ;
And we are one !—one, by the dreadful bond
Which binds us both with madness until death !
Roderick, is this not love ? Oh, false of tongue
Think you that little golden trinket-ring,
A child might break, is such a bond as this ?—
Think you the God who made our souls alike,
Hath stamped that likeness on them for their curse ?
I could not love you as I do, if God
Had not ordained that I should love you so.
His am I, with this sin upon my head,
And His the sin if there be sin in this ;

For He who made myself hath made my love,
Since that is more myself than I. I say
My love for you is wider than the seas,
And higher than the heavens !—Yet what am I ?
A woman, feeble as the drooping reeds
That tremble on the river. I can bend,
But not my love ; I tremble—I am faint,
But not my love ; I weary—not my love ;
And I can die, but deathless is my love !”
He saw that she was mad. “ Menamence !”
“ Oh, do not speak to me !” she cried ; “ I bore
To look on you, but cannot bear your voice.
That music sends the blood into my brain,
Until the burning furies make me reel,
As if the seas were tossing in my head !—
You see I’m not too mad to know I’m mad !—
Let me fly far from you, that I may die !
I cannot die while I am near you : Life
To me is—you ! And while you’re by, I live !
Farewell ! I go from you—I go from life !”
She sprang back through the brushwood, and was gone.

She had the thread of every forest path,
And only by a quivering of the ferns
Knew he which way she wandered. Then he spoke:
“By Heaven and Earth!” he cried, “though both were
lost

In saving her, she shall be saved by me!
Is my breast so impure, it cannot be
A holy shelter for this stricken fawn?
Is my heart, then, so vile, that it can beat,
And yet not feel one throb it dare confess
Responsive to a love as deep as this?
“Menamenee!” he called; “Menamenee!”
Only the echoes, taking up his voice,
Deceived him with the thought that he was heard,
And mocked him with his own despairing cry,—
“Menamenee!” The pine-woods lay before;
Behind, the little homestead he had raised
To shelter her—that other—whose bright face
And pure confiding eyes rose up between
The Indian girl he followed, and himself;
And would not change from the eternal smile

That took its sunshine from her faith in him.
“ Oh, my young wife, whom I am bound to love,—
Oh, my sweet wife, whom I have loved so well,—
Fair, trusting girl, whom still I fondly love,
Come not between me and this wretched one,
Whom I would only—shelter ! Let me be
Her guide, to lead her to the living Rock,
From whose deep shadow consolation falls
Upon the soul, as evening falls on earth ! ”
Thus cries his heart, he calling through the trees,
“ Menamenee !—come back, Menamenee ! ”
Through labyrinths of shrubs and trailing weeds,
That hang about his feet and hinder him,
He seeks her in the forest ; till, at last,
Through the deep shade, he sees a sunbeam glint
And shimmering, dance upon a fringe of beads,
That he remembered hanging round her dress,—
The simple Indian ornaments ! He knew
The glitter of the worthless glass ; he cries
Once more, “ Menamenee ! ” and following
The glancing shadow through the rustling leaves,

Breaks through the forest out upon the shore
Of a great lake, and sees her far away
Fluttering upon the summit of a crag,
Like some bright bird with wild, disordered wings,
That smoothes its ruffled plumes before it soars.
Swiftly he sprang across the reedy waste
That lay between them, and with one strong hand
Caught at her garments. “Child, thou shalt not die!”
He said. “Thou say’st! Indeed, I cannot die,
While thou art here! Why do you haunt me? you,
You cross my path, now I have fled from yours!
I do abjure you, and the love I bore
For your dark, cruel face! Why do you stretch
Forth your strong arm to stay me from the waves?—
Where, gazing down, I see my own wan face
Look up at me, and cry, ‘Lo, here is peace!’”
“Because I would not see thee so much sin;
For He who holds the keys of life and death,
Curses the mad intruder whose rash foot
Through the dark threshold of His mystery
Unbidden enters.” “Am I bound to live?”

Is that," she said, "the law of your just God,
Whose mercy you have told of? My soul laughs
At mercy that refuses me a grave!—
Let go your hold!"

"Oh, heavenly Father, Thou
The more than father of the stiff-necked, hear
My prayer, and strengthen my bewildered soul
With power to help this wretched one!" "You pray
I see it in your eyes, although your lips
Move silently: Pray that I may fall dead,
Low at your feet!—Pray nothing else for me!"
He drew one arm around her shivering frame,
And led her gently—as one in a sleep,
Who walks not knowing where—into the wood,
Until they stood beneath the maple-grove
Where last they had parted. "Now, Menamenee,
Wilt thou be calm and listen?" "Ay!" she said,
One little, restless hand upon her gun,
With the incessant motion that betrays
The unhinged mind; "I'm calm enough," she said
"The storm is past: look into these dry eyes,

No rain of tears will ever drown again ;
And do not fear the shower.— Shall I rave ?
Hear my hoarse voice,—so weak, I scarcely hear
Its tones myself : the power to storm is gone—
Gone, with the power to weep !—What wouldst thou say ?”
“ But this, Menamenee. My wife, ere long,
Will join me here ; thou shalt, as once thou saidst,—
Thou shalt a sister, wild one, be to her ;
And she shall teach thee with that tender love
Woman, who loves and has her love returned,
Can feel for her who loves, yet loves in vain——”
“ Thy wife !—Thy wife my sister ! Yes, I said
We could be sisters. Through the silent nights
I’ve brooded many things within my breast,
And that amongst them. No, that cannot be !—
Pale-face, I’ve found the secret of my grief !”—
Her hand upon the gun the while she speaks,
The left hand on the barrel, and the right
Driving the ramrod down upon the charge,—
“ I’ve found the secret of this agony—
Thy life !” She laughed aloud the maniac’s laugh,

Thy life ! For wert thou dead, then might I rest ;
I could not track thy footsteps, nor could creep
And peer in through the crevice in thy hut,
To watch the outline of thy gloomy face
Against the lurid glow of the low fire.
I could not listen to thy voice, that calls
Once in an hour, perchance, to horse or dog,
And shivers in my heart as though one sent
A frozen arrow through it. I should be
At peace, so thou wert dead ! Lo, here we stand ;
The tall funereal trees about us frown
Like ghosts of the dead chieftains of my race,
And each points to thee ; they would have thee dead !
The flow, long waves upon the river banks
Curl upwards through the reeds, and then recoil
With a dull sound that calls to me, as they,
With all the rest, would have thee, Pale-face, dead !
In the grey sky one dark and threatening cloud
Assumes the outline of a human hand,
And points to thee !” “ Menamenee, thou’rt mad !”
“ No, Scottish stranger, only desperate !”

The little clicking sound betrayed the hand
With which she cocked the gun. “Menamenee !”
“Stand off !—away !—or I shall slay thee. Fly !
Trust to thy swiftnefs through the winding paths ;
Hide thyself from me and my wild despair,
There’s something here & within my broken heart,
Stronger than even love. Away !—begone !
Go, meet thy wife, the fair, the delicate !
Her little feet about the craggy shores
Of our wild land, will wander till they fail,
Lacking thine arm : Go,—go to her you love,
And leave me, lest I slay you !”

He had met

With madness ere to-day. His stern, dark glance
Caught hers, and fixed it, till her frenzied gaze
Trembled and wandered from him restlessly ;
Her hand relaxed its grasp, until the gun
She had just lifted, slid towards the ground.
“Menamenee !” He knew that life and death
Hung on the power of his dauntless glance
To hold at bay the wild and shipwrecked soul

So eager for destruction. Thus they stood,—
Stood face to face beneath the waving boughs,
While through his mind a thousand hurrying thoughts
Rose o'er the fatal present, and swept back
The pictured memories of days long dead :—
His wife, his Highland home, his friends, his kin,
The clan, the broad claymore, the heathery hills ;
The skirmish with the foe beside the lake ;
The shivering harebells holding in their cup
A tiny drop of dew, which children said
The good folk who had lodged a night in them,
Left in the flower for fairy recompense ;
The mists upon the mountain-tops ; a voice —
His mother's — calling to him through the dusk ;
The white sheep framed against the blackening sky,
Upon the summit of a craggy pass ;
The baying dogs, the pibroch's shrilly sound,
Piercing the mountain air. His love — first love,
That first dear meeting by the rippling burn,
When the blue eyes that dared not look in his,
Told their sweet story, though they veiled their light.

All these thoughts in his heart, while his grave eyes
Still fix the flame in hers, and quench the fire
Madness has kindled there ; but while he looks,
His life depending on his power to gaze,
The Devil loosed within her spirit, down,
One quiver in his glance reveals a hand
That leaves the gun, to flutter at her breast
And clasp a bunch of withered grasses, tied
With a blue faded ribbon. He had plucked
And bound them thus, the day when first she led
His feeble footsteps out into the air,
After the fever. Thrown aside by him,
But treasured ever afterwards by her,
She wore them in her bosom — when most mad,
Still sane enough to guard them tenderly —
He guessed the story of them. “ Loving heart,
To cherish even this ! ” He glanced aside
To wonder at this love. Too fatal glance !
Up to her shoulder went the gun — to fire,
And drive the deadly bullet through his heart,
Was but a moment !

So he fell, his face
Half buried in the rank growth of the grass !
From the dull skies the thunder-clouds had rolled,
Uncurtaining a flood of summer light
That rippled through the dark aisles of the wood,
Revealing at the end of an arcade,
Framed by a back-ground of green fluttering leaves,
Two figures bathed in sunshine — one, a girl,
Whose showery curls of glistening golden hair
Floated about a cloak of homespun grey ;
While at her side, a knapsack in his hand,
A sailor pointed onwards past the spot
On which the Scotchman lay. A hundred birds
Rejoiced in the new sunshine, and her voice,
Scarcely less joyous, prattled as she walked
Beside the sailor. “ He has built a hut,
My proud young husband—ah, you’ve heard of that ?
I had his letter bidding me to come ;
I have it here upon my heart, a charm
I wore against the peril of the sea ;
So that, if shipwrecked, I might take to death

A scrap of writing shaped by that dear hand ;
And I have left the only world I know
To come to this strange world to follow him,
As I would follow him to death." "To death !"
The Indian Princess caught the words, and mocked
Their music in a wild, discordant scream,
Then pointed to the dead ! The radiant curls
Of the young wife above his clustering hair
Fell, as she dropped beside him on her knees !
She lifted up his face with shuddering hands,
Instinctive terrors freezing all her heart,
And looking in that dead face, straightway saw
It was the only face earth held for her —
This was her welcome to her Western home !

Alas, for grief that will not kill ! she lived —
Lived to return to her dear Scottish land,
But never more to see as once she saw
The blue sky and the mountains. Dead in life,
For years, the duties of a loving child,
A tender friend, a ministering soul,

Were done by her—but more than dead in life,
Even the joy of seeing others joy,
Could not win smiles from her, nor tears !
She lived. If living death like this, be life—
It is to me so much to say—she lived !

They buried him beneath the pines, and reared
A rough-hewn wooden cross above his head—
On the third day from that on which he fell,
They set it up, the sailors from the ship,—
The English ship,—and coming the next morn
To see if any had disturbed it, found
The Indian Princess lying at its foot ;
Her arms twined round that emblem of All Love,
Her head now buried on the fresh-turned sod,
And like him, laid beneath it, cold in death.





THE SECRETARY.

I WAS his Lordship's secretary then,
Groping in dusty blue books half the day,
Scratching, with tired hand and rapid pen,
Letters,—hard things in courtly phrase to say ;
Refusing this or that with lordly grace,
Or granting now a pension or a place :

Searching for classic reference half the night,
Scribbling statistics till my sight was dim,
And rising often earlier than the light,

To work, and wait, and drudge, and think for him :
My days were hardships and my nights were pain,
To soothe my soul I dreamed. Wild dream and vain !

Wild dream ! Oh, wilder looking back than then ! —

And then, oh, wilder than I dared to think !

I knew my station 'mongst my fellow-men,

And yet so near the fount, I could but drink :

So, knowing it was poison all the while,

I drained the poison of my 'lady's smile,—

His daughter, Lady Lucy. I would not

Paint the dark face,—so dark, and darkly bright ;
So pale, yet with a rosy glow that shot

Through the pale cheek and flushed it into light ;
The deep grey eyes—long-while I thought them black :
I loved her—I—I, my Lord's, hired hack !—

His drudge !—the dull machine !—the man he paid

To dig out from the ruins of old dreams,
Gems of high thought, which might, reset, be made
To light his last dull speech with borrowed beams,—
I, whose task was it to correct a proof,
Revise an essay, work, and keep aloof !—

Yes, keep aloof,—outside the high, bright sphere,
Which was not, and which never could be, mine ;
A distant world, however seeming near ;
Wide gulfs betwixt the portal and the shrine :
Yet, Lady Lucy, well you might have known,
You had no other soul so near your own !

Who thought with you as I did ? Who of all,
Perfumed Lifeguardsmen, Marquis, Lord, or Duke,—
Which of the spaniels coming at your call,
To whom your soul was as an open book ?
Whose words came trembling over yours, and who
Drew back to let his thoughts be told by you ?

Who laughed at what you laughed at,—who could tell
In every page of the last book you read
The very phrases which would please you well,
Where you would smile, where toss your scornful head ?
We have but half-souls, lady, and my soul
Must have joined yours to make a perfect whole !

Perhaps you knew this—perhaps never knew,

But there has been a trembling in your voice,
That every vein of mine went shivering through,

While a'! my mounting blood cried out, “Rejoice!”
Till its swift torrent, hot in throat and cheek,
Stifled the words I vainly tried to speak.

Whether she led me on, or whether I

Had but my own mad self alone to blame,
I cannot tell; but love grew agony,

The world's cold barriers fell before the flame,
And words I would have died to keep unspoken,
Told her the heart that she had won—and broken!

“For hearts are toys, and why not shatter them?

The bracelet on your round, lace-shrouded arm,
With fairy dangling gold and glimmering gem,

You break in pretty petulance. What harm
To crush out hearts not of your own degree,
And trample on a low-born worm like me?”

I know the very hour I spoke all this :

The gilded clock—where Cupid, all in gold,
Stole from his mother, golden too, a kiss—

With a low melody the half-hour told
The scent of flowers upon the balcony
Came blowing in. All this is still with me.

The hot sun, shut out by Venetian blinds,
Drew streaks of light upon the velvet pile ;
And in the square without, warm summer winds
Fluttered the leaves. I see my lady's smile ;
She sat in a low chair, with cushions piled ;
No one was near,—perhaps that's why she smiled.

Too early for the Duke—the Marquis, too,
He would not call so soon. I brought a book
Which she had asked me for. I knew—I knew
I could not cause that bright, quick, startled look,
That shot into her eyes before they fell,
And shot into my heart of hearts as well.

She thanked me for remembering her request ;

I laughed a bitter laugh. "Remember ? Yes,
Remember ! Oh, the tortures, the unrest,—

The long, long hours—the dreams, the wild distress,—
Waking to find how false they were ! I bowed ;
My heart might have told all, it beat so loud.

It beat against my breast ; with stormy cry

It said, "Why do I suffer thus ? Fool, speak !
No longer silence. Tell her all,—and die !

In one great rapture let me burn and break.
The worst is past, the torture deep and dumb ;
I have died daily, let the last death come.

"Tell her, and hear her storm of pride and scorn ;

Bare the rent breast to brave her worst cold word—
Than life has been, can it be more forlorn ?

Though heard with scorn, 'twere something to be heard.
Tell the great love, the struggle of your life,
And come defeat, it will but end the strife.

“ You know what she will answer. Have you not
A hundred thousand times rehearsed this scene ?
Her fancied scorn has made your cheek grow hot :
Can the real pain be worse than that has been,
When you have conjured up her angry eyes,
And gone half-mad with pictured agonies ? ”

We talked about the weather and the town.

She said, how full it was. Oh, wondrous art !
To speak of these things—keep the ~~passion~~ down—
Hold the strong tempest raging in my heart,
And answer her,—“ Yes, town, indeed, is full ;
And Brighton, as you say, no doubt was dull.”

“ You drive to Richmond ? — No ! Ride in the Row ?
The last new novel ? — Good ! I think so, too.
You’ve read those poems by Lord So-and-So ? ”

And thus I held the storm, although I knew
The wild, mad words would break forth at the last :
The gilt clock chimed another half-hour past.

And as it struck, I standing lingering there,

She, looking up, cried out, “How pale, how white
You grow; are you not well?” Down by her chair

I fell, half on my knees. A painful light
Glared in my eyes—the blood rushed to my head—
The pictured walls spun round. “Oh! to be dead!

“Dead, Lucy! Dead, and gone to burning flame,
For one brief kindness from those deep dark eyes!”
In words like ~~this~~ the spoken madness came:

“Oh, hear the great voice of my miseries,
Hear the strong language of the breaking heart,
Which, ere it breaks, would tell how loved thou art.

“This little moment is my life. The rest,
The fever, and the madness, and the pain,
Was living death. Oh, Lucy, to be blest!

To live! Though I go back to death again;
For one wild rapture barter length of days,
And burn out all my soul in one fierce blaze!”

She did not speak. A white imploring hand
Fluttered before me, as 'twould bid me rise;
I rose, and stood as drunken men that stand
Thinking the earth reels, and not they. Her eyes!
Was it the mist on mine? or were they wet?
I knew not then, nor know I truly yet.

The Earl's hand on my shoulder! A strong grasp!
A riding-whip that whistled through the air!
I tried to strike him down—but the tight clasp
Of two white arms, so fragile and so fair,
Entwined in mine, I could not disengage:
I could not hurt *her* in my wildest rage.

I felt the hot blood trickling on my face;
The whip had blinded me—I could not see!
Great crimson waves surged up and filled the place,
I could not tell whether it was for me
Or for her father, that long fearful scream—
I tried again to strike him ——— then, a dream!

Dreams that were madness ; yet I knew I dreamed,
Having at intervals a dim, dull sense,
Of something horrible : not all it seemed,
Being a ghastly horror too intense
To be a thing of flesh and blood vitality,
Its darkest terror being upreality.

For the vile creatures glaring round my bed,
Were vilest, and most hateful to my eyes,
Because I knew that from my own hot head
Sprung forth these personated agonies ;
Aye, the worst fiend that tortured me, I knew
Out of my own hell-haunted fancy grew.

After the Earl's whip cut me in the face,
After the rage that would have struck him dead,
I have no memory of time or place ;
Lying on, what all thought, a dying bed,
A terror to the house that heard me rave,
While doctors—pitying—strove my life to save.

Oh, the long hours ! Oh, the eternal nights !

The problems on the hideous papered wall,
The strange bewildering sounds, conflicting fights,
Now drawing-room, prison-house, or senate-hall,
The Strangers' Gallery, the Park, the Ring,
I, everywhere at once—and everything.

Labouring always—always growing near

To the dear object of my heart and life ;
Pursuing still through every doubt and fear,
Now vanquished, now a victor in the strife,
But never, never, never once to gain
The end that had rewarded all my pain.

Never to see her, clasp her in my hand,

Hear her dear voice ; in one long dream I know
Without her boudoir door I seemed to stand,

And knocking, heard her answer sweet and low ;
Yet though so near my heaven of heavens to win,
Even in dreams I could not enter in.

Sometimes I was a king, and my hot brain
Seared by a golden crown, that seemed to be
The glittering cause of my undying pain :
Sometimes, far out upon a loathsome sea,
Floating 'midst weeds that changed into dead men,
Now whelm'd I sunk, now struggled on again.

So, through delirium's worst and darkest forms,
I battled with the only friend I had ;
Battled with ~~Death~~ ——. The haven from all storms,
I was so near, yet entered not ; so mad
As never in my agonies to know
The friendly hand I had entreated so

To lay its soothing touch upon my heart,
And lull it into rest — and so he passed,
The pale-horse and his rider so depart —
The loaded ferry-boat speeds onward fast,
And I left shivering on the unfriendly shore,
Hear the last echo of the old man's oar.

They told me I was saved, the crisis o'er—

Two packets lay upon my table—one,
In the Earl's hand, a haughty mandate bore,
That my old tasks might be again begun
When I was equal to them,—this was all;
He thought me still then, at his beck and call!

The second was a daily journal, wet,

And folded upwards a long paragraph,
Marked with a dash of ink. A Baronet,

One of our gracious Sovereign's household staff,
Was, they had heard, about ere long to wed
The Lady Lucy——. Oh! weak heart and head,

That could not see the shipwrecked passion sink

Without that wild cry for the treasure lost,
Which, after all, could we but wisely think,

Was never worth the racking pain it cost—
The pang that ends love's dream should move our ruth
No more than parting with an aching tooth.

'Tis gone—the torture, and the waking hour—

Gone with the pain; we shall sleep sound to-night—
No more the plaything of a woman's power;

Our heart is empty, but our heart is light;
Send the cold corpse of dead love to the tomb,
And sweep and garnish forth the vacant room

For the next comer; *Vive la Bagatelle!*

And if we cannot dream as we have dreamed,
If life has lost a sunlight and a spell,

It never was the golden thing it seemed;
We only mourn a phantom, and are made
Wretched, because we could not grasp a shade.

Yes, we have played Pygmalion's foolish part,

Created beauty, and believed it fair,
But could not give the marble, soul or heart,

And so forsake the statue in despair,

Because it is a statue. Let it go,

We have learned wisdom from love's overthrow.

“*Amare et sapere*,”—yes, the sage
Said well, for God concedes that gift to none—
Strike out the pitiful and puerile page,
Love dies from life ere life is well begun ;
And I’ve a purpose left to live for yet—
Some things, my lord, we do not soon forget.

There is a reckoning yet ’twixt you and me,
Which you, no doubt, suppose I shall forego ;
For from the height of aristocracy,
You, looking down on the poor worms below,
May think we have not passions, rage, or pride,
And that blows do not sting through our thick hide.

I can afford to wait—I am not one
That can forget—I have no gentleness,
Or if I ever had, it now is gone—
Gone with my wasted love. I do confess
I can remember scorn or insult long,
And never yet forgave a fancied wrong.

But I can wait. I've something in my blood
That may be madness, or that may be hate ;
I watch the tide, and when it gains the flood,
That hour is mine, though it come long and late.
I may not strike you openly, but when
You are struck down where most you trusted, then,

Then know it is my hand that prompts the blow,
However far I be, however long
Ere I avenge that scene of which we know,
And whencefoc'er appear to come the wrong—
In the meanwhile, my lord, as heretofore,
I am your secretary, and no more.

So weeks grew into months. Lucy was gone—
Married, and travelling on the Continent ;
And months grew into years, and I, alone,
Had no companion, but that strong intent,
That one great purpose,—*vengeance upon him*,
Beside which every other dream grew dim.

And so farewell to Love, my mistress now

Was Hate—and yet she seemed so little changed,
My goddess, that I sometimes wondered how

Her true name should not have been “love estranged.”
The old, old fever : yes, indeed, her name.
Alone was new, her attributes the same.

The same long sleepless nights, the same despair,

When the dark end appeared so far away ;
I know the Fury’s face was not so fair

As the dear Psyche of the bygone day ;
The old griefs were far purer, I confess,
But the old pain, I think, was scarcely less.

So months grew into years, and he, the Earl,

Married a second time. I saw his wife,
She might have been his daughter, a fair girl—

What ! could he dare the tempest and the strife,
Give his calm days into a woman’s power,
And live the life that changes every hour ?

Now happy, now accursed, now doubt, now fear,
 Ufurping the once proud and peaceful breast ;
Only more wretched as she grows more dear,
 And knowing every joy but that of rest :
Yes, he was now the slave to woman's whim,
I could almost afford to pity him ;

But that I had that purpose to achieve —

‘ I think for some time they were happy. Yes,
And at the first she loved him, I believe,
 And the fair face and floating golden tress,
Her silken robes, her jewels, feathers, lace,
Fluttered like sunshine through the gloomy place.

A year had passed after their bridal tour,

 And we were staying at his country-seat,
A park upon the margin of a moor,
 The politician's favourite retreat,
Where, far from the dull labours of the state,
He had a haven from the storms of fate.

Here, by her side, he seemed to me to change,—
To be transformed into a better man ;
Even his voice would have a music, strange
To its old cadence. Love, perhaps, which can
Work miracles at will, did this. I know.
That even I saw it—I, his bitterest foe !

He changed to me—the stern and haughty air
Subdued. He never thought of that black day
On which he struck me ; deeming I could bear
(As formed, no doubt, of quite a different clay
To the fine porcelain of his rank and state)
An insult, and not pay it back in hate.

And so, he smiled ; and I, poor wretch, might bask
In the new sunshine of his princely grace !
He gave me, too, a well-bred lacquey's task,—
To be my lady's guide about the place,
Her mediator with the parish poor—
Her envoy to the starving peasant's door.

I know not how, but thrown together thus,

It seemed as though we had been friends from youth ;
A likeness of the mind united us :

Her spirit mirrored mine with fatal truth,
And trembling on her lips, surprised, I've heard
The echo of my own unspoken word.

She was not——no, 'tis hard to say the word,—
She was not that the sternly just call good ;
High sentiments from those sweet lips I've heard,
And seen the fair face flush with noble blood,
When she has marked the oppression of the strong,—
A glowing protest against want and wrong.

Alas ! she was not all she might have been !

She had not that high strength of mind, that takes
Its own pure standing-place upon life's scene,
And guards a heart, all virtue's, till it breaks ;
She was a thing of impulses, and made
Ever by outward influence to be swayed.

And I, grown bitter from that olden wrong—

The avenging Furies must have willed it so—

I,—whose each word was harsh, contemptuous, strong,

Dark with such doubts as only bad men know,—

Reigned in this stormy soul, so like my own.

And for his slave, my lord was overthrown.

Heaven knows I never wooed her, never fought

This vengeance, till it fell across my path ;

The ready-fashioned thunderbolt I caught,

And seized the power it gave to wreak my wrath :

So came the flood-tide of my darkening fate,

And blindfold Love took up the arms of Hate.

One fair June morning, when departed May

Yet left her white wraith in the hawthorn flower,

Blue violets starred the bloom-enamelled way,

Pale cowslips trembled deep in grove and bower,

She—Eleanor, the Countess—walked with me

Home through a wood. We had both been to see

A sick man,—dying, as he proved to be :

The dull eyes glazed before us in the room,
And the dark shadows of mortality

Rose in his face and filled the place with gloom.
Oh, deep relief, in the bright summer air,
To find that even yet the earth was fair !

How fair to-day ! Beneath the dark arcade
The waving hyacinths, in one azure sheet,
Deepening to richer purple in the shade,

Trembled, a sea of flowers at our feet,
O'er which the fairies only should have trod.

“ The poor old man is gone, then ? ” “ Yes. O God !

“ To be where he is now, and to be free

From all the torments and conflicting throes,
The immortal tortures of mortality,—

To be with him, it may be in repose,—
To go from under yonder weary sun,—
To go—aye, even with my work undone ! ”

She, Eleanor—I knew she loved me, yet
I knew the strong restraining woman's pride;
Love, strong to conquer when that power is set
Against the power to die: down by my side,
Deep in the hyacinths, fell on her knees •
The Aphrodite of those purple seas.

Her head sank low upon her slender hands,
And all its wealth of heavy chestnut hair
Uncoiled itself from classic plaited bands,
And fell about her throat. So, kneeling there,
Midst wild hysteric sobs, whose passion broke
Above the passion of her words, she spoke,—

“Why do you speak thus?—What, you wish to die?
You! and with you death means, indeed, the End!
Have you no pity, then? You know that I
Live for you, by you; and the pang must rend
My life from out my soul, when yours is left!—
Lionel!—you shall not go, and I be left

“To die upon your corpse; for there would be,
In that one moment before I could die,
The tortures of a lifetime; I should see
Your face without the light; your dark deep eye
With no soul looking out, and I alone,
The hideous earth still standing, and you—gone

“No, no, if life be wearisome to you,
Give me your hand, and lead me where you will,
The road can have no fears, though wild and new
The path, if I am with you, near you still;
The cup you drink, what draught foe’er, can be
Nothing but nectar, Lionel, to me.

“Perdition has no dread—the best, the worst
That dim beyond can give to you and me;
My curse ’twere to be blest were you accurst,
And misery with you, not misery!
The dreariest circle in that lower world
Were heaven to me, so I with you were hurled.

“And fell with you, with you to sink or rise,
To be that which indeed I almost dream
I am—yourself! In those mysterious skies,
If, as I’ve sometimes almost dared to deem—
There is a better home from which we came,
There, Lionel, we must have been the same.

“You think I’m mad. Oh, Lionel, condemn,
Despise me as you will. The tale is told—
My soul has found wild words, and yet in them,
My thoughts’ translation sounds but dull and cold;
There is no language the strong heart can speak,
It can but inarticulately break.”

Oh, to have had a better, purer heart,
However stricken, to have set her right,
To have loved, yet had the power to depart,
And leave her journeying onward to the light.
To have said. “Let us lift our tearful eyes,
And find a holier madness in the skies!”

She should have had the strong old Roman faith,

And firmer will than hers to guide her way :

She, strong for self-abandonment, for death,

But oh ! so wandered from the light of day ;

So given over to the wild, brave soul,

Great in all sacrifice but self-control !

/

I loved her ! Could I less when so beloved ?

And in my younger, purer, better days,

Out of this depth of love, whose depth is proved

. Best by renunciation — which gainsays

Its own wild promptings for another's bliss,

I could have told her all the wrong of this :

I could have spoken, in those earlier years,

Good words, whose holy strength might make her strong

I could have pointed through all doubts and fears

To that one road, however lone and long,

Which is the only pathway for the blest,

And whose sure end is in a heavenly rest.

But all was darkened, all had long been blind ;
The deep blue sky was now but deep and blue,
I recked no longer of a home behind,
Or saw a promise in the rainbow's hue,
The great undying stars were only stages
In the vast mechanism of the ages.

There was no heaven, the earth was but a show,
And we, so less than nothing ! Let us live !
Poor at the best the utmost joys we know —
All we can snatch is little ; what they give,
These gods, is ours : “ My Eleanor, my soul,
The unknown oceans round us rave and roll ;

“ The unknown shores beyond, if shores there be,
Are distant, and they may be dark and cold ;
But we, we know but this,—for you, for me,
Is but one certainty when all is told ;
That you, life of my heart, alone are mine,
And I, in spite of heaven and earth, am thine.”

She yielded to my prayers, that she should fly
With me, far from the false life which she led ;
The mockery of truth, the acted lie,
Were to be hers no more. That night we fled —
He, reading in his study fat till late,
While we met by a lonely orchard-gate,

That led into the wood, thence to the road,
Where a chaise waited for us. Through the night
The summer lightnings, palely trembling, showed
Eleanor's beauty, calm but deadly white.
The die was cast, the Rubicon was past,
And she was free, and I avenged at last !

How shall I tell the rest ? — my life has been
A poor, mad record even at the best :
But now I come upon that dreadful scene,
The which once acted, sleep, and peace, and rest,
Fly from my soul ; and, burning in my brain,
Blaze the first fires of eternal pain.

He overtook us. I had thought of this,
And wished it might be so—I wished to say,
“Behold, my lord, her who once made your bliss
We are avenged. I’ve waited for to-day;
Amongst your *other dogs*, some few sharp *kits*
Your lordship one day gave me. We are quits!”

It would be thus, I said. It was not so!
He overtook us at a village, where
We had changed horses; nothing do I know
Of how he traced us, only he was there,
Shaking his feeble threatening hand on high,
And screaming curses to the stormy sky,

Calling the lightnings down to strike her dead—
She stood a little way apart from me;
Great raindrops fell on her uncovered head,
I tried to lead her to the chaise, but she
Refused to stir from where she stood; “I own
The wrong I’ve done you—it is mine alone.

“Not his,” she said, “the blame; I will not speak
Of *why* I love him. He who made my soul
Knows that, not I. I have been wild and weak,
Wicked, degraded, lost; a dreary goal
Must end the race I run; all this I know,
You can but curse my madness, and then go—

“Go to the world, and tell it what I am,
And that I dare proclaim my guilt aloud;
Tell how I spurned the falsehood and the sham,
The farce, the painted show, the hireling crowd,
Ready to crawl before the guiltiest name,
And only merciless to open shame.”

I could not see his face. I threw my arm
Round Eleanor, to draw her to my side,
To shelter her from his wild rage. She, calm,
Repelled protection, and with fearless pride
Stood as a statue, waiting for the end,
And as a statue seemed as like to bend.

The threatening hand I saw was raised again,

But saw no more, when she, with one wild cry,
Sprang in my arms—a bullet pierced her brain,—

It was my heart he aimed at—and then I
Felt the warm life-blood trickling on my breast ;
'Twas hers—and she was dead. She is at rest !

She died for me, for me she gave her name,

(Oh, do not say she gave her soul as well,)
Up to eternal and undying shame ;

For me, by murd'rous hands in youth she fell ;
She caught the stroke that should have set me free,
And took the deadly ball designed for me.

And never mine in life, but mine in death,

I laid her corpse in the rude Inn's best room,
Watched the blood-dabbled lips from which no breath
Should ever come again ; while through the gloom
The pale face shone out from the tangled hair
With ghastly beauty, terrible as fair.

They took the Earl, and bound him, mad and raving,
Like some wild thing which fills men's minds with dread,
Now for some means to end his torments craving,
Now crying out, that it was *I* was dead,
“Not her,” he shrieked,—“it was not she who fell,—
It could not be, I took my aim too well.”

Through the long night that seemed to know no morning,
Through the long hours that seemed to know no close,
I watched her till her face grew on the dawning
Out of the pillows, where in calm repose
She lay, and through the dusky, flickering light,
Her profile gleamed, one shadowy streak of white.

It was not I, but he, then, that went mad ;
Or was it me they bound, and him they left ?
I cannot tell, some fever that I had,
Of that last day my memory has bereft.
I cannot tell. They tore me from the bed—
They should have buried me alive instead.

They should have laid me under the cold earth ;

They laid her there—what she could suffer, I
Could suffer too—oh, what was my life worth ?

They laid her under the un pitying sky,
The tempests beating down on that fair head,
But I will not believe that she is dead :

If she were dead she could not watch with me

Through the long nights, as she has done. Yes, has
They tell wild tales of my insanity,

But they are mad, not I—I've seen her, as
In the old days, with love in her blue eyes,
Too self-abandoned to affect disguise.

If she were dead I should not feel her breath

Warm on my lips, as I do night and day ;
All that we understand in that word Death,
Is that the thing we love shall be—away—
And by this rule she lives, and never died ;
For never have I missed her from my side :

Now in her olden loveliness, and now

With smears of blood upon her whitened cheek,—
With damp, entangled hair, and ghastly brow,
And dabbled lips, no more to smile or speak,
But never absent—never, never gone,
And my worst loneliness has not been lone !

Why do they let her haunt me thus ?—’t was she

Who first loved me—I read it in her face !

Love ! Something more than love,—some devilry

That made perdition of each tender grace ;

As though she said, “ We both are mad, then why
Fight with a love, less love than destiny ? ”

I know our bond was madness, and not love ;

The old, uncured passion drove me mad ;

And her wild words, that seemed my heart to move,

But galvanised that dead dream : thus she had

Only from me that shadowy, second madness,—

A new-born love, born dead from bygone sadness.

Though all the nights are darknes, still she'll come ;
 And in the thick, black-blindness she is there :
 She adds new horror to the dismal gloom,
 And makes more darknes with her falling hair ;
 So when that man who guards me says she's dead,
 I point to where she sits beside my bed.

One day they let me out into the air,—

Into a garden, where thick groves of trees
 Shut out the world. Oh, God ! how fair—how fair
 The place seemed to me ! How the balmy breeze
 Sent life and rapture thrilling through my breast !
 I half believed in that mad word called *rest*.

And wandering through thick shrubberies, left at large

By him who guarded me, I came upon
 A spot where sat a keeper with his charge,—

An old, white-headed man. The hot sun shone
 Full in his face : so imbecile, so wild,
 So childish, yet so little like a child !

I knew him!—Yes, this ghost of days gone by,—

 This shadow of the thing that I had hated,—

This was the Earl! 'Twas fit, indeed, that I

 Should meet him thus. Poor puppets, it was fated!

This blind, wild misery, from first to last,

In planets untranslatable was cast.

He sat and gibbered at some foolish game,

 With painted pasteboards in his weak, white hands:

I know the day he played for name and fame,

 And when his cards were nations, crowns, and lands;

Now with the toys of that poor, mad French king,

Well pleased, he played, as lost and mad a thing.

Oh, to have met him in his day of power

 In this deep, silent grove,—with one strong hand

To have wrestled with him in this lonely bower,

 And left his black blood to pollute the land

On which we stood; that future years might know,

By poisonous weeds, the spot where fell my foe!

• But not for me this triumph. He was dead !

This poor, resuscitated corpse was not
A thing to hate ! Upon this palsied head

What curses could I heap ? That it might rot,
And the crazed brain go back again to clay ?
To wish this were to bless him. From that day

I never saw him more, nor wish to see :

What further vengeance can the Furies give ?
The once proud Earl, who scorned and tortured me,
To change to this poor puppet, and *to live* !
I left him as I heard his shrill laugh ring,
Harsh and discordant, while he played a king !

His keeper fooled him. Thank God, I was poor !

They never lied to me : they let me be ;
A harsh voice muttering at the grated door
(That was enough of outer life for me),
A surly order to me to be still,—
Was my laugh, then, like those, so wild and shrill,

That rang through the long galleries in the gloom ?

Or was it I who laughed ? It may have been,—
When horrid shapes rose up and filled the room,

I may have shrieked ; or when cold hands, unseen
But loathsome to the touch, plucked at my breast,
It may be that I broke the keeper's rest.

Oh, for that lingering death that will not come !—

“Is it a lie, then ? Do men never die ?

I have borne more in my life's little sum

Than might have made a nation's agony ;

And yet I live,—or is this, *after life*,

The fierce commencement of eternal strife ?

That thought has come to me,—that is the worst

Of all my torments. Since I met with him,
I think that she, and he, and I, accurst,

Wander for ever here, where all is dim ;
And horrid fancies haunt my burning head,
That we are dead, but know not we are dead !

If there is any peace or any heaven,

If on some distant shore there should be—rest ;

If e'er was wretch from sin by suffering shriven,

May I not have some title to be blest,—

My only crown of joy in Paradise,

Oblivion of my earthly miseries ?

I do not ask to live—that dream is o'er ;

I do not ask to love—that lie has fled

In all the tortures of this hither shore,

And all the pangs of which my heart is dead !

The bliss of heaven were scarcely bliss to me,

And all I pray is, only—*not to be !*





THE LAST HOURS OF THE GIRONDISTS.

“**G**UILTY!” One wild, indignant shout! One
of the band

Falls at his comrade's feet. “What, brother, weak?
Dead, by his own and not the hangman's hand!

The only cowardice the records speak
Is this, recorded in that marble cheek—

“Valazé, couldst not thou like us await?
One common heart is ours; and it should break
Beneath one blow. The traitor's venom'd hate
Will but immortalise us with a martyr's fate.”

One—Sillery—has cast aside his crutch :

“ Oh ! this, my day of glory, this ! ” he cries.

Then all, with one last, lingering, pitying touch,

Approach where coldly, dead Valazé lies.

Thus they depart—the glorious, the wise—

And with them fades the dream so pure and bright

And Freedom's star, new risen in the skies,

They see o'ershadowed. While a thick, black night
Reigns hideous in the land, and blood obscures the light.

Back to their dungeon, with the inspired song

Of freedom swelling on the midnight air !

Back to their dungeon — Oh ! but not for long

Those darkening walls together will they share.

But friendly hands have spread a banquet there :

Great waxen lights are shimmering in the gloom,

While flowers, antithetically fair,

Upon the oaken prison-table bloom.

What, is this revelry to mock their hastening doom ?

No ; but the high of soul, and pure of heart,
May smile upon the brink of that abyss :
And, ere for brighter hemispheres they part,
Catch a last sunbeam from the light of this.
To-morrow, death ! Dark synonyme for bliss ;
To-night, wine, friendship,—aye, mirth if they will.
One voice alone from the proud band they miss,
One vacant place the dead was meant to fill—
“ To-morrow night, oh, brother, we shall lie as still !

Thus seated round the board, with eyes illumed
With the foreshadowed glory of their fate,
They talk, the young, the brave, the good, the doomed.
The immolation of inferior hate
May lay them low ; it lays them low too late —
They cannot be extinguished. They have been,
And even in death will be for ever great !
So, with proud presence, and the conqueror's mien,
They play the last sad act upon their life's dark scene.

And in their talk there gleams the undying wit,
Which even the darkest subjects sparkles o'er,
As a black sky with summer lightning lit ;

But mirth seems discord, and they evermore
Return to whisperings of that unknown shore

To which they go. Genius with them is faith.

“ What though we float there in a sea of gore,

So that we reach the land ; the useless sheath
Flung from the immortal sword, set free in death.

“ And we shall meet, and meeting there, shall be

What we have not been in this mortal life,
Except in dreams. We shall be free ; yes, free ;

Regenerate by the baptismal knife,
Far from this land of murder, hate, and strife,

We shall be there, where Liberty is Peace ;
Where patriots win a crown with glory rife,

Where falsehood enters not, where discords cease,
The pang these traitors christen death is but release.

“Release from what? A land whose soil is red
With innocent blood that crieth to the skies;
Where the axe reigns, nor spares the holiest head;
Where glorious truths are made the masks for lies,
Where widows’ curses, helpless orphans’ cries,
And all the voices of the desolate
From morn till night up to God’s throne arise;
Where men breathe but one tongue of rage and hate,
And all, to strike a neighbour’s death-blow, watch and wait.”

So the dawn finds them—earnest yet serene,
Thoughtful not mournful. Peace has set a seal
On every brow. Life and the world have been,
And have been glorious. Their looks reveal
The calmness of repose that heroes feel;
The long campaign is o’er, the day is done,
They have fought nobly for a nation’s weal,
The mighty cause they struggled for have won,
And in a bed of glory redly sink their sun.

JOANNA OF NAPLES.

A SHRIEK ! one lingering dismal scream,—
 The sleepers blend it with their dream,
 And turn and sleep again ;
 The swallows hear it in the eaves,
 It trembles through the forest leaves,
 And shakes the fields of grain.

The sentry by the outer wall,
 The house-dog dozing in the hall,
 Lift shivering to the sound ;
 The courtiers in each turret room
 Hear dreadful echoes pierce the gloom,
 And fear to look around.

But ere it dies — that lingering scream —
Men startled from a broken dream,
Spring wakeful to their feet ;
And through the corridors they go,
With hurried footsteps to and fro,
While loud the tocsins beat.

One hears the voice, to whom each tone,
From its first accents fondly known,
Must yet familiar be :
His faithful nurse, upon whose breast,
Prince Andreas once was hushed to rest,
Now cries, “ I come to thee !

“ My lord ! my lord ! ” That hideous shriek
That chilled each heart and blanched each cheek,
From Andreas’ chamber came.
She points the way — she goes before —
She leads them to the lofty door,
While red the torches flame.

They draw their swords—they enter. What!
Nothing but silence? He is not!

His vacant couch beside,
With shadowy face and falling hair,
Beneath the moonlight purely fair,
She stands—his sometime bride.

No more! The lady and the light,
The stillness of the summer night,
The murmur of the trees;
Far off upon the mountain-side,
Like white-robed ghosts the shadows glide,
And tremble on the seas.

No more! Her pale face meets the glare,
The gleaming torch, the courtiers' stare,
The wonder of the crowd.
She stands—a queen upon her throne
Ne'er statelier stood than she, alone,
As beautiful as proud.

“ Why do you break upon my sleep ?
What mean these vigils that ye keep
About my chamber-door ? ”

Abashed, the squires and courtiers stand,
Waved back by that imperious hand,
And by the look she wore.

Then spake the nurse : “ Your leave to speak,
My lady ! By that ashen cheek,
From which the blood hath flown,
Where is the husband long abhorred ?
I ask thee, woman, for thy lord,—
Why art thou here alone ? ”

She laughed : “ ’Tis strange you ask me this,
I never made his woe or bliss ;
Nor was it mine to know
Whither he went, or why he staid ! ”
Thus gravely, then, the other said,
“ Cain, madam, answered so ! ”

“Look through the chamber, squires, and find
Your lord. It was no wandering wind
That called me from my bed;
A whisper in the heart that nursed
The prince, through love of her, accursed,
Has told me, he is dead.

“Search, squires, and find your lord,” she cried,
Then flung the grated casement wide,
And wildly gazed below:
Above the grass the blossoms bend,—
The shadows of the lime-trees blend,
And flicker to and fro.

Here, with his face towards the sky,
She sees her murdered master lie,
With flowers about his head;
His blood upon the trampled sod,
His soul, unshriven, gone to God:
“I knew that he was dead:

“ I knew that he was slain,” she cried,
“ Heaven yield him joy of such a bride !
And all the powers above,
Look down upon the next who woos,
And shield and prosper him who sues •
For such a lady’s love.” •



LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE.

ENCIRCLED by the deep black Convent shade,
 So close the shadows on my closing life,
 And so all earthly joys, all worldly strife,
 Mix with the shadows, and to shadows fade.

Unto this quiet end, my weary feet
 Have bent their toilsome way through masque and fête
 Late come I here, but cannot come too late;
 God's hand still beckoning to this calm retreat.

This quiet end, with an unquiet mind,
 Have I foreseen through mists of hindering tears,
 Foreshadowing, for many stormy years,
 That day when I should leave the world behind.

So, Louis, once mine Idol, Faith, and Shrine,
Sole creed and hope—sole madness, thought, or dream,
Thine image fadeth from me, in the beam
Of images, eternally divine.

And be my penance the deep Convent shade,
Far from thy star-like eyes' too fatal light;
So through the shadows of the dark, long night,
May I yet reach those stars that cannot fade.

And in God's land of the Divine For-Ever,
Whose days and nights are as a thousand years,
That poor, brief Past, atoned by many tears,
Shall be remembered, Kingly Louis, never.

But from the ruin of that broken dream,
Unstained, serene, thine image shall arise;
And in the stormless world beyond the skies,
Our souls may melt in one immortal beam.

One star, one cloud, or one wild wandering breeze,
Part of the mighty mystery of the spheres,
May link and mingle, through the eternal years,
The undying souls of Louis and Louise.



QUEEN GUINEVERE.

I WEAR a crown of gems upon my brow,
 Bright gems drop down upon my yellow hair,
 And none can tell beneath their grandeur, how:
 My brain is racked with care :

How wicked love my loft soul is enchaining,—
 As sinful men are chained to torture's wheel,
 So I, the prisoner of my griefs remaining,
 My own dark doom do seal.

'There is a figure that I should not fashion,
 Whose form I shape from every changing shade ;
 The shadow of my wild and wicked passion,
 I meet in grove and glade.

There is a voice, whose music ever changing,
I hear in ev'ry murmur of the sea,
In ev'ry wind o'er moor and mountain ranging,
In ev'ry rustling tree.

There is a face I see in mournful splendour,
In each star-jewel of the crown of night,
Whose lineaments all nature's beauties render,
In shadow and in light.

There is a dream that I should perish, dreaming,
A dream that haunts me still by night and day ;
But yet so subtle am I in fair seeming,
None dare my fame gainfay.

And thus I murmur : Oh, my Lancelot !

First of all warriors breathing heaven's breath,
I pray to die, that thou mayst be forgot ;
If we forget in death.

Oh, my lost soul ! Oh, my loved Lancelot !

My broken faith ! Those deep and dreaming eyes !
I cannot hide me where thou comest not,
To shut me from the skies.

• Oh, weary earth without my Lancelot !

Oh, dreary life bereft of end or aim !
Save to seek out some solitary spot,
Wherein to hide my shame.

Oh, fatal passion, that absorbs my life !

Oh, dreadful madness, that consumes my soul !
A queen, aye, worse ; oh, misery, a wife !
God give me self-control !

•
God give me strength to bear, and silence keep ;

Angels, once women, pity woman's pain,
And hush me to that slumber, calm and deep,
From which none wake again !

· *SI AND NO.*

· *THE NAPOLITANS VOTING FOR ANNEXATION WITH
· PIEDMONT.*

· **U**NDER the sunshine the urns are set,
Under the sunshine the crowds are met,
The mighty, the humble, the haughty, the poor,
Never so met or so mingled before.
Speak, oh wondrous and gathering crowd !
Soul of the nation, speak aloud !
Shall Naples, your birthplace, be great and free ?
Hearts of the people, answer “ Si.”

Men, whose lives have been spent in chains,
Men, grown old 'neath the torturer's pains,
Women, whose beauty has faded away,
Shut from the light of the beautiful day,

Children, whose fathers the headsmen slew,
Fools, who have fancied a Bourbon true,
Know ye this day-dawn of Liberty?
Rescued populace, answer, "Si."

Answer, oh, people! oh, citizens, come!
Blind and grey, and stricken and dumb,
The beggar that crawls from the hospital door,
The invalid, never so strong before;
The voices of children, that scarce can speak,
The voice of the dying, though never so weak
Every voice in the land shall be
Mixed in the might of this answering "Si."

Who would recoil on a day like this,
Who would fall back from the national bliss,
Who would be traitor, and coward, and fool,
Let him cry "No" to Emmanuel's rule.
But, oh, free-born sons of the Southern race
Rush to be bound in this vast embrace,
Italia, united, regenerate, Free,
Souls of the populace, answer, "Si!"

BY THE SEA-SHORE.

SHE tore the black sea-weed in her hand,
 "He looked down the long glittering sand,
 Her eyes roamed far o'er the wandering sea :
 "Oh, she is all ocean and earth to me,
 All heaven and earth, and sky and sea,—
 More than creation," he said, "to me."

Her lovely lips had a scornful grace,
 A haughty glory lit up her face,
 Her eyes shone out o'er the billowy tide,
 But their light was veiled by a cloud of pride :
 "She reigns o'er my heart as the moon o'er the tide :
 I live by her beauty, I die of her pride.

“ I die of the scorn in her glorious eyes,
I die of the pride in her cold replies ;
But I live in her loveliness, breathe in the light
That gleams through the clouds in her eyes’ dark night
Her pride is the shadow, her beauty the light,
And the wide world sleeps in her eyes of night.”

My love is as vain as her words are cold,
And my dream will die when my dream is told ;
Her heart is as hard as this beaten shore,
That the lonely surges are wandering o’er ;
Yet I linger here on this dismal shore,
And I cannot go till my dream is o’er.”

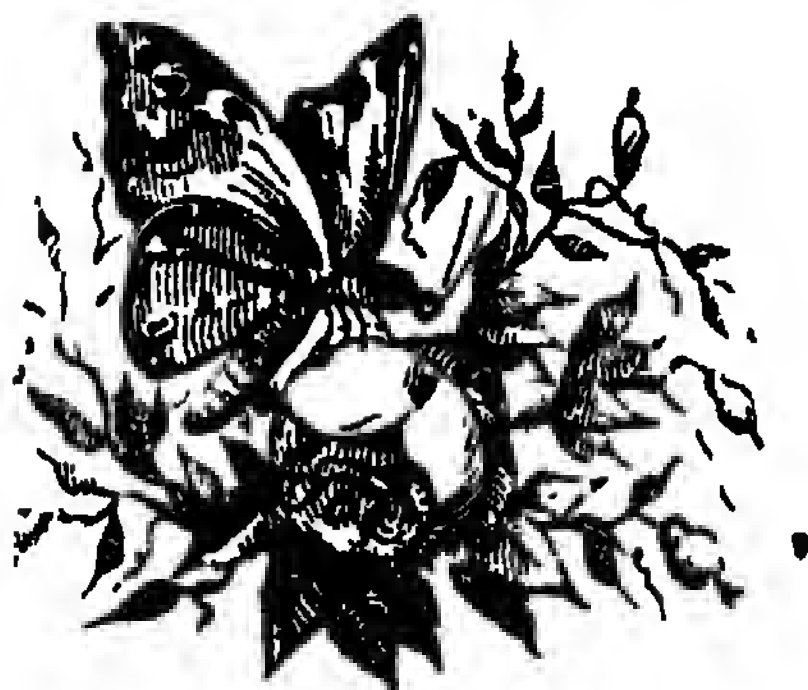
“ Why do you linger ? ” at last she said ;
“ The low sun dies in an opal bed,
The low sun fades in the purple sea.”
“ Yes, all the world is at rest but me :
Oh, thou that art more than earth or sea,
Have pity—have pity,” he cried, “ on me ! ”

“Hear my words, if you mock my prayer,
Let me not die of this dumb despair ;
I love you—I fear not your pitiless scorn—
I love you better than night or morn,
I laugh at your pride, and I smile at your scorn ;
But I love you—I love you by night and morn.

“I love you in spite of my wiser thought—
I love you with love that can never be bought—
But alone in your pride I leave you here,
Where the desolate shore is dull and drear ;
For a prouder mate do I leave you here,
And a loveless life with its grandeur drear.”

Has she no word on her curling lips,
No answering glance from her eye's eclipse,
But the darkness of night, as he turns away,
To leave her under the dark'ning day ?
“Oh, life of my life, why turn away ?
I love you better than night or day.

“ Was it my part,” she said, “ to speak ?
Better my heart should in silence break :
Looking but now o’er that shadowy sea,
Little cares he, I thought, for me ;
More than heaven, or earth, or sea, . . .
Am I, indeed, beloved by thee ? ”



*AT LAST.**He.*

AT last, at last ! My hand rests on your hair,
 Through the deep shadows in your eyes, I look,
 There was a time I read them as a book ;
 Life drifts away, and all life's long despair,
 And lo, I rest my hand upon your hair.

At last ! How should you guess that it was so ?
 I poring at my studies in the shade,
 You, in the sunshine, glitteringly arrayed,
 Flitting, embodied brightness, to and fro ;
 I say, how should you guess it could be so ?

How should you know I loved you? there was not
One link between us; not a thought of mine
That had one shade in harmony with thine;
In your bright mission, and my quiet lot,
One unison, one concord, there was not.

And yet, and yet—apart from all the rest,
I've watched you till the watching grew a pain,
And yet I lingered, watching you again,—
Love, a dull anguish, stifled in my breast,
But in all outward seeming, as the rest.

So I grew mad, not what the world calls mad,
But that slow madness of the soul, that broods
Under the gravest and the stillest moods;
And some have called me churlish, others, sad,
They all were wrong, they should have called me mad.

If there had been a hope, a thought, a chance
Of your love, I had, hand to hand with fate,
Fought that great battle which makes manhood great,

And walked through fire to win one gentle glance ;
But oh, my Nemesis, there was no chance.

And so my life ebbed, purposeless, away,
As some slow river through a desert flowing ;
Enough to me that weary life was going ;
The pall of night fell dark on every day,
And I was happy, so life ebbed away.

Life held no purpose underneath the skies,
Earth held no prize but one, and that was you,
And that could not be mine,—I knew, I knew,
I was not born to win so great a prize,
Then what was there for me, below the skies ?

At last, at last ! My hand is on your hair,
Deep, deep, I gaze into those tender eyes ;
Low in their depths some hidden sorrow lies ;
Tell me, whose life has been one long despair,
Speak, as I rest my hand upon your hair.

She.

At last, at last ! That sorrow in my eyes
Has brooded there for melancholy years ;
At first their light was drowned in hopeless tears,
But there was comfort in loud agonies ;
It is the quiet grief has dimmed my eyes.

At last, at last ! And yet you cannot read
The sorrow that has shadowed all my youth .
What ! can the soul not fathom the soul's truth,
With the same sorrow could your true heart bleed,
And yet the pain in my heart never read ?

I loved you. With that wondering regard
I scarce dared own unto myself ; I thought
My pride debased, to love, and love unfought ;
Where others knelt, where others prayed, 'twas hard
Never to win one wandering regard.

And yet, and yet—how often have I turned
To the still shade, where bending o'er some book,
You, the grave scholar sat, with earnest look
That never answered mine? my cheek has burned
That my heart owned a passion unreturned—

And so I married, and have been I'll not
Reproach you with that misery! My chain
Wore its slow length, though every link was pain.
Let the dead past be buried and forgot,
But, oh, to have been loved, yet known it not!

I do reproach you with a blighted life,
I do accuse you for our wasted years,
Your ruined manhood, all my hidden tears,
My life-long lie as an unloving wife,
These on your head, with all a wretched life.

Dying, you send for me, to tell me this,
Which told before—I might have been. Oh, God!
Teach me to bow beneath the bitter rod;

It was Thy will to hold me from such bliss,
So, from his dying lips I gather this.

Yet, by Love's immortality, we may,
In some serener sphere united yet, . . .
This lower loss, these lower griefs, forget
In the great glory of eternal day.

The fulness of the soul responds, "We may."

So rest thine hand in blessing on my hair ;
I have been loved, I have been loved—at last !
This wondrous present blots out all the past ;
Life drifts away, and all a life's despair—
So die, beloved, thine hand upon my hair.



T I R E D O F L I F E .

• **W**E have drunk the wine of life,
 • • We have drained the cup to the lees,
 • And after the struggle, the battle, the strife,
 • We laugh at man's miseries.

•
 • **Y**es ! we, too, were passionate fools, •
 • Loving, and dying for love ;
 • Ours once the heart no philosophy schools,
 • And the bosom a prayer could move.

•
 • **Y**es ! we at a changing shrine
 • Once knelt, and adored, and prayed ;
 • And the short-lived goddess was always divine,
 • In the light of our love arrayed •

Yes ! we, too, suffered and wept,
And hope's gay visions were ours ;
And the dreams that came to us while we slept,
Were decked in young Fancy's flowers.

But oh ! how the glory died,
From our love, and our hope, and trust,
And how, borne down by Time's pitiless tide,
Our goddesses crumbled to dust.

And the prize, when the race was done,
With its torturing hopes and fears ;
Was it worth the anguish it cost, when won,
In those foolish, early years ?

We have drained the wine of life,
To the goblet's bitterest lees ;
And we look back after the turmoil and strife
To laugh at our miseries.

Then we're wondrous witty and gay,
And we mock every earnest heart,
While we marvel that ever, in life's dull play,
We played such a passionate part.

But we sometimes pause in our jest
To note its ungenial mirth,
And wonder sometimes if it really is best,
To be careless of heaven and earth.

To have lost our belief in truth,
To have lost our deep faith in love,
To have out-lived each dream of our golden youth,
And our hope in a Heaven above.

And neither to live nor to die,
But to drag out the length of our chain,
With a mirth that must always end in a sigh,
And laughter allied to pain.

To be savant, punster, and wit,
And fought for at dinner and ball,
To wear the last fashion, and under it
To hide from the eyes of all,

The weary, dissatisfied breast,
So empty, and joyless, and cold ;
While we sneer at man's folly, and wild unrest,
In the battle of life so bold.

To be older in soul than years,
To be heavily bearing our life ;
Oh, better the harassing hopes and the fears
Of that bygone tempest and strife.

Oh, better the earliest death,
Ere the freshness of childhood had past,
Than years to drag on of slow lingering breath,
And to die so tired at last.

WAITING

TWO women stood upon the yellow sand,
 The waves and sea-weeds curling round their feet,-
 One shaded with a brown but slender hand
 Her dark eyes from the heat.

I asked, "Why watch ye thus beside the deep,
 Whose rise and fall the hidden moon controls?"
 "We wait a touch shall wake us from our sleep;
 We're waiting for our souls."

"Are not your souls within your breasts?" I cried,
 A bitter laugh ran down the stretching sands;
 "My soul went forth," one said, "with him who died
 Far off in unknown lands."

“ And from that day I’ve been the shadow only,
Of what I was before that day came down ;
The dead, than I, could never be more lonely,
In yonder peopled town.”

I wept to hear her. “ You are broken-hearted,
By loss of him you loved so well ! ” I said.
“ Not so, both heart and soul with him departed,
And I am only—dead.

“ I knew his death-hour, though none other knew,—
The world between us ; but I felt him die—
A shiver pierced my inmost being through—
That was his parting sigh !

“ His comrades waited for the ship’s return,
And hoping, fearing, lingered on the shore ;
I had no fear, no hope,—‘ Go back and mourn,
You will not meet him more.’

“ I said — they called me mad, and went their way ;
I watched the waves come up, and rave, and roll,
But never saw his face unto this day ;
And thus I lost my soul.”

The other woman neither spoke nor moved.

“ And she ? ” I asked. “ I know her not,” she said,
“ I only know that she has lost and loved,
And she like me, seems — dead.”

“ Love comes not once,” I said, “ but till the last,
The soul’s dead winters change to living springs,
God wakes the lyre to music of the Past — ”

“ But not the broken strings ! ”

“ But not the broken strings,” she cried, “ Go to,
Why do you stand to argue with a ghost ?
We see not these things as they seem to you
Because our *souls are lost*.”

“Leave us ; why waste your comfort on the dead ?

We with our hopes were wrecked on yonder tide ;
We ask no pity, neither tears,” she said,
“ We did not weep — we died !”

And so I left them — more I could not le.

Still stood they where the surges round them broke,
But evermore my memory would return
To her who never spoke.



UNDER GROUND.

OH, let the scornful lip be loud,
 Though every word were once a wound;
 Rail on, beloved! be cold, be proud;
 I can defy you,—under ground!

Pass by my grave with careless tread,
 Spurn the low grass and crush the weed:
 The turf may fade above my head,
 The heart beneath will never bleed.

I loved you, as men love, who stake
 Their soul upon one cast,—I lost.
 Your common hearts can only break,
 And life was all my madness's cost.

I did not curse you when you fold
Your wicked heart ; and when you lied,
And bartered all your soul for gold,
I let you go, and only — died.

So laugh, and tell them how I threw
Name, honour, creed, beneath your feet ;
Tell all I lost in loving you,
And how you flung me off, my sweet !

But keep this in your memory :
When all is told, when all is said,
The triumph still remains with me,
And I am victor — being dead !

So laugh your loudest ! — say your worst !
Ring o'er my grave the silver sound !
Through you in life and death accurst,
I yet escape you — under ground !

VALE.

Go down into the grave of all the Past :
 'Leave me alone.

Gh, passion, wide and deep and first and last,
 'Thank God thou 'rt gone !

Go back into the dreary gulf of Time ;
 'Thy reign is o'er ;
 Thou, once so lovely in thy golden prime,
 Lovely no more.

But evermore a hideous, ghastly shape,
 From shadows made ;
 This so-called grief is only—an escape !
 Good speed, false shade !

Go back ! With all things like thee, fair and lying,

Go to the dead !

Thou, so short-lived, and yet so long a-dying,

Back to thy dead !

Bright years I've lost for thee and thy delusion,

Which at the best,

Was mingled joy and pain, in much confusion,

But never rest.

Manhood's high hopes through thee and for thee blighted,

Dear hast thou cost ;

Thou that canst leave me in the end benighted,

Homeless, and—lost.

But go, for of no more canst thou bereave me ;

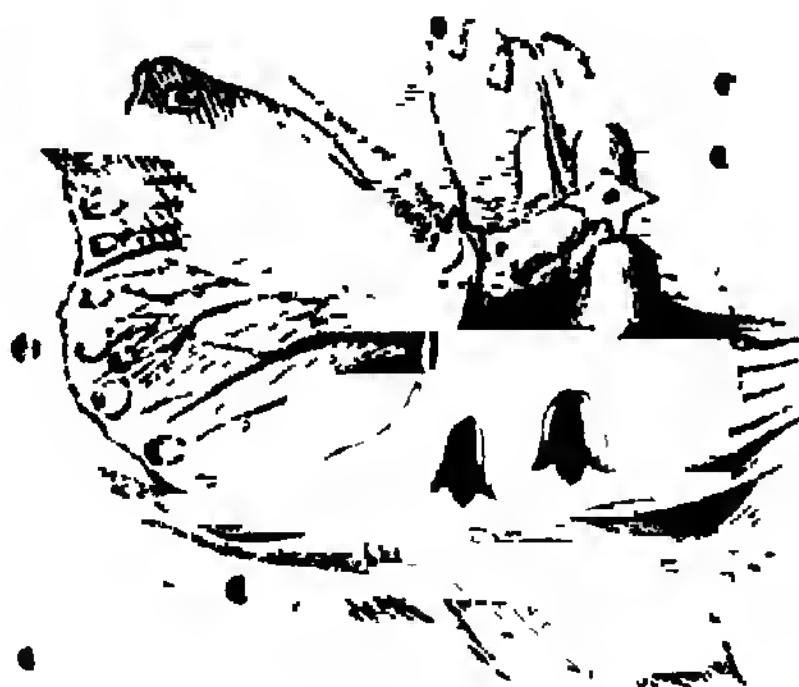
All hast thou had :

One good thing only canst thou do,—to leave me,

Leave me not mad !

Then go, go, take thy phrensie's and thy raving
 Out of my mind. . .
Go with thy fever and insatiate craving,
 Leave me — resigned.

Struck by thy bitter lightnings, hopeless, blasted,
 Loveless, unblest ;
Shorn of that life which I for thee have wasted ;
 Only — at rest !



GOING DOWN.

A SONG.

--

DEATH in the sky, death on the wave,
 In fight of our native shore,
 No power can help, no arm can save,
 We shall never reach it more :
 Then fire one gun, for a last farewell
 To the distant lighted town ;
 Though they cannot aid, they will hear the knell,
 For we're going—we're going down.

There's a girl who loves me, that will mark
 Every cloud in the changing sky,
 Whose heart will sink as the heavens grow dark,
 And the raging surf rolls by ;

I can almost see the light that she burns
In that swift receding town,
And I know in her grief to her God she turns ;
But we're going — we're going down.

Yet you see my face by the lightning flash,
And you cannot see me blench ;
There's a spirit o'er which the waves may dash,
And a fire they cannot quench ;
So let's breathe one prayer that our God may hear,
Look once at our native town,
And those glancing lights that seem so near,
While we're going — we're going down.



*GABRIEL.**A LAZY SONG.*

OH, men may strive with heart and brain,
 To mend the nation's woes ;
 But I who know they strive in vain,
 On thyme and turf repose.

So let them work, and let them weep,
 No toil, no tears will I,
 But lie asleep in wild wood deep,
 And dream until I die.

The gipsy smiles to see the wiles,
 By which the world is won ;
 And sheltering in the forest aisles,
 Laughs at the golden sun.

Oh, wise men work, and wise men weep,
Beneath the burning sky ;
But I will sleep in heathery deep,
And dream until I die.

The sun has his allotted task,
Each bee his work to do,
But in the sunbeams I can bask,
And scent the flowers too.

And if I hear of souls that burn,
Or hearts that break in vain,
Why, in the fern, I drowsy turn,
And go to sleep again.



FAREWELL.

LET others run the toilsome race ; and win,
 So will not I ;
 Too old am I the struggle to begin ;
 Then let me lie,
 Where on the waving grass the shadows glide,
 And only mark
 The ebb of Time's too slow receding tide,
 That drifts me to the dark.

And thou, beloved, pass onward on thy way,
 Live down thy shame,
 I curse thee not for that dead yesterday,
 Why should I blame ?
 Had we been happier, though in seeming blest,
 Ah, who can tell ?
 Farewell, adored, that word is almost—rest,
 Then but that word—Farewell !

WAKING.

MY life is over ere my days are done,
 The crown is withered ere the race is won,
 The veil hath fallen ere the shrine is neared,
 And the fair statue which my love had reared
 Is shattered to the ground.

Thy beauty was the beauty of my mind,
 Which with thine outward image I entwined,
 Till every thought that God made fair in me
 I shaped and sublimated into thee,
 And with thy likeness bound.

I made thee all the purest tell of truth,
 About the glowing beauty of thy youth,

I shed the light of every lovely dream,
And seeing thee in that reflected beam,
Beheld thee more than fair.

'Thou wert to me, th' incarnate Beautiful,
Beside which all the stars of Heaven were dull ;
' set thee high above all earthly strife ;
Into one dream of thee I made my life,
And waking, I despair.



• *A SHADOW.*

I MET a ghost under the summer sky,
That turned and mocked me as he passed me by
“Know you me not?” this pale, sad phantom said,
“I am the shadow of thy good days dead,
Thou canst not fly from me.”

He took the fashion of a face once dear,
He stole the voice I once so loved to hear,
He called me back to hopes and dreams long fled,
Fair scenes of life for ever vanished,
And pitiless was he.

“See, see,” he cried, “I take her by the hand,
And lead thy lost love from the shadow-land ;

Look well upon each beauty and each grace,
Dwell on the dear and long-remembered face,—
For ever lost to thee.

“Then go into Life’s thronged and busy ways,
And bury in thy heart the bygone days;
Bury the discontents thou canst conceal,
But in their silence dost the deeper feel,—
Thou canst not bury me.

“I am thyself,—linked to thy mortal frame,
I am thy fadden’d soul’s immortal flame;
I am thy youth, thy hopes, thy dreams, thy Past,
O’ershadowing thy life, while life shall last :—
My name is Memory.”



LIFE IS A CHILD

“Life is a child, which must be rocked in a cradle till it falls asleep
 V. CLAIR

OH, lull the infant, Life, to sleep,
 Upon the breast of Time ;
 Hush it to slumber soft and deep,
 And soothe it with a rhyme.
 Oh, little Sleep ! Oh, transient Sleep !
 So full of fevered dreams ;
 For shades we strive, for shadows weep,
 Where nought is what it seems.

• But lull this weak child, Life, to rest,
 The little sleep will pass,

Life is a Child.

And, ere the dreamer's hopes are blest,
The sands fall through the glass.
The low sands fall — the fast sands fall —
The sands too swiftly run,
And, ere we know we dream at all,
Both dream and sleep are done



TO A COQUETTE.

LADY, in thy radiant eyes,
 A depth of deadly falsehood lies ;
 Lady, from thy low replies
 Bitter memories arise
 That recall past agonies ;
 When I hung upon thy sighs,
 When I deemed thee true as wise ;
 But Time's wings, as fast he flies,
 Sweep youth's stars from manhood's skies ;
 And I know thy fairest guise
 Only masks thy cruelties.

THE LOST PLEIAD.

OH, tell me what madness betrayed thee,
 Lost star of the beautiful seven ?
 Still lovely, though sin doth degrade thee,
 Poor outcast from home and from Heaven !

Oh, hast thou no dream of thy childhood,
 No memory that speaks to thy breast,
 No vision of meadow or wild wood,
 That now were a haven of rest ?

And even the love that allured thee,
 Can the mem'ry of that be no more ?
 Though the dark clouds of guilt have obscured thee,
 Gleams no light from thy pure days of yore ?

Oh, pitiful wandering goddess,
Poor merchant of graces and wiles !
Dark, dark the sad path thou hast trod is,
And mournful the light of thy smiles !

As I watch thee, a vision arises,
Of what thy past days may have been ;
And, lost in a host of surmises,
I see, as perchance some have seen

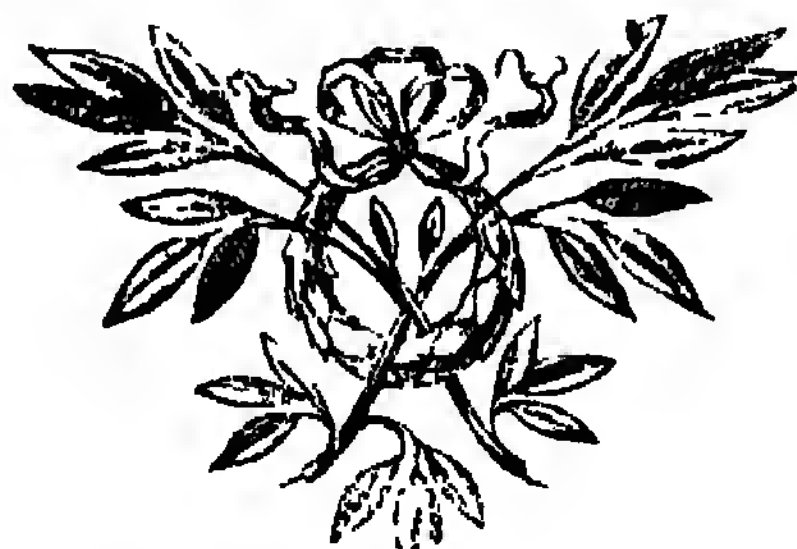
Thee, a babe at the knees of thy mother,—
A child, amidst summer flowers strayed—
A girl, pride of father and brother,
In innocent beauty arrayed.

So, why should I, wandering goddess,
Pass thee by with such scorn in my breast ?
It may be the cold churchyard sod is
Sole haven thou knowest of rest.

Then weep, ay, weep, wandering goddess !
Weep, lost one, thy tears may atone ;
Though bitter the stroke of the rod is,
It falls not for vengeance alone.

At that day when all wrongs shall be righted,
In that land where all secrets are known,
Even thou, now so lost and benighted,
The angels may claim as their own ;

While there shall be more joy in Heaven,
Than over the pure ninety-nine,
Restored of the beautiful seven,
When thou, midst thy sisters, shalt shine



AFTER THE ARMISTICE.

... 1859.

SO the brief summer days have departed,
 The summer day's warfare is done ;
 And the noble and leonine-hearted,
 Rejoice in the battles they've won.

There are laurels, light, splendour, and glory,
 In the gorgeous first city of France ;
 For we've beaten the heroes of story,
 As the rifle eclipses the lance.

Let us throw up our caps in the sunlight,
 Let us welcome the Prince we adore ;
 But let us remember there's one light,
 Our Emperor cannot restore :—

The light of young lives just departed,
The light of love lost in the grave ;
Past joys to the now broken-hearted,
The light of the souls of the brave ;

The fair, only son of the woman,
The newly-betrothed of the bride ;
Hosts, who fell hand to hand with the foeman,
Intermixed in death's terrible tide.

Few pictures there are without two sides,
The sunshine gives place to the cloud ;
And e'en glory's brightness has new sides,
Unknown to the hearts of the proud.

For the wail of the desolate woman,
And Rachel's loud cry of despair,
In the triumph we've won o'er the foeman,
Arise on the clear summer air.

So the river rolls on to the ocean,
So the sun towards the West still doth tend,
So grief, glory, joy, sorrow, devotion,
Must go on side by side to the end.



AMONG THE HYACINTHS.

WE have left the world behind —
 We have lost the beaten track,
 And the hum of the city upon the wind
 We have only to guide us back.

Oh ! this is indeed to live,
 To be free to dream and to dare,
 When all that the busy world can give,
 Is a murmur on the air.

In the wood where the hyacinths grow ;
 And the earth is as blue as the sky,
 We wander to-day till the sun sinks low,
 And the rosy shadows die ;

Till the day, with its foul of flame,
Till the beautiful day shall die ;
To return, but not to return the same,
With one cloud in the changing sky.

So but once we may live these hours,
So reckless, and radiant, and gay ;
But once may gather these wild-wood flowers,
That wither ere close of day.

For the bright spring moments die,
As the blossoms perish and fade ;
And the careless jest, and the low reply,
Are past with the light and shade.

And through life, ah ! never again
Will the same brief hour return,
With alternate throb of joy and pain,
In the hearts that beat and burn.

Among the Hyacinths.

Oh, weary, and flat, and stale,
Is the life we throw away,
The talents and powers of no avail
To shorten one summer's day.

But, who leaves the world behind,
To go from the beaten track,
Should hear low voices upon the wind,
That sweetly call him back :

That breathe from the wild-wood flowers -
That cry in the murmuring stream,
“ This mortal and earnest life of ours,
Was given us not to dream ; ”

“ To question its depth and truth,
Or to fear its darkening close :
But to do great deeds in our golden youth,
And to scorn the slave's repose : ”

“ To scorn the slave, who lies,
And basks in the summer sun,
Who leaves to lament him, when he dies,
On the wide world’s face, not one.

“ Then up from amongst the flowers,
The path is wide and free,
And earth claims of man his noblest powers,
To conquer her misery.”

